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# **From Intervention to Exit: American Foreign Policymaking towards Afghanistan**

**Sharifullah Dorani**

**Thesis written in order to fulfil the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in International Relations**

**School of Government and International Affairs  
University of Durham**

**2015**

# **From Intervention to Exit: American Foreign Policymaking towards Afghanistan**

**by Sharifullah Dorani**

## **Abstract**

This thesis examines United States foreign policy towards Afghanistan as a contemporary piece of analysis informed by Foreign Policy Analysis. As part of its Global War on Terror, the Bush Administration intervened in Afghanistan in early October 2001, and only in June 2011 did the Obama Administration decide to begin to end US involvement in Afghanistan. During these eleven years, a timeline which is the subject of this thesis, the US Global War on Terror policy in Afghanistan experienced a number of changes, evolving from a policy of 'abandonment' prior to the 9/11 terrorist acts to a military 'intervention', from a 'counterterrorism' to a 'counter-insurgency' strategy, from 'destroying' terrorism to 'containing' it, from treating the Taliban as 'terrorists' to declaring them as 'non-terrorists', from the goal of 'defeating' the Taliban to 'degrading' them, from seeing Afghanistan as having compelling relevance to US national security interests to seeing it as having minimal importance, and from intending to spend as long as it took to secure a 'democratic' and 'strong' Afghanistan to the objective of establishing a 'good enough' state so that the US could have a quick exit. Four decisions are identified to signify these developmental turning points: the decision to intervene in late-2001; the decision to employ a counterterrorism strategy in early 2002; the decision to approve a counter-insurgency strategy in late-2009; and the decision to begin to withdraw US troops in June 2011. Informed by the Foreign Policy Decision-Making Approach from Foreign Policy Analysis, this research analyses *what* the United States foreign policy towards Afghanistan was at each of the four turning points, and *how* and *why* it was constructed. Policymakers' idiosyncratic characteristics, especially their belief systems and images, their bureaucratic positions and personal ties, domestic influences, and, most importantly, 'false assumptions', are those causal factors shown to be responsible for the resulting strategy for the Global War on Terror, which began in Afghanistan, and later for the abovementioned strategy changes. One of the main arguments of this thesis is that the assumptions made by both the Bush and the Obama Administrations were ill-informed and misjudged, and derived from rigid ideologies rather than realities on the ground in Afghanistan, and that therefore the policy choices failed at the implementation phases, greatly triggering the aforementioned changes in the Global War on Terror strategy in Afghanistan over the course of the eleven years.

## **Declaration**

No material in this thesis has been submitted by me for a degree in this or any other university. All the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated or acknowledged by means of completed references.

## **Statement of Copyright**

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author, Sharifullah Dorani. No quotation from it should be published in any format without the author's written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged appropriately.

## **Dedication**

To  
My Parents  
and  
My Wife

## Acknowledgments

The research and writing of this PhD thesis would have not been successfully completed without the essential and gracious support of many individuals. Special gratitude and personal thanks are due to all of them.

First, I should like to express my sincerest gratefulness to my supervisor, Professor John Dumbrell, who has supported and guided me throughout my thesis with his patience and excellent knowledge. He devoted a great deal of his precious time to reading and commenting upon this work and making many invaluable suggestions, and without his unfailing encouragement, advice and guidance this thesis would never have seen completion. Thank you, John.

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Last but not least, my deepest appreciation goes to my family, my sisters and brothers, especially my parents, *Hajji* Asadullah and Bibi *Hajji* Dorani, for their continuous prayers, love, encouragement and unwavering moral and financial support, which have made it possible for me to accomplish one of my main goals. I am and will always remain grateful to my wife, M. Dorani, for her thoughtfulness, patience, endurance, understanding, and unstinting support. This thesis could have not been completed without the unwavering support of her. It is to my parents and my wife that I dedicate this thesis.

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## List of Abbreviations

ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Afghan National Police
AQ	Al Qaeda
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
BP	Bureaucratic Politics
CENTCOM	Central Command of the US Armed Forces
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CNN	Cable News Network
COIN-S	Counter-Insurgency Strategy
CT-S	Counterterrorism Strategy
CT-plus-S	Counterterrorism-Plus Strategy
DCI	Director of Central Intelligence
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
FP	Foreign Policy
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
FPDM	Foreign Policy Decision-Making
GWOT	Global War on Terror
IR	International Relations
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence of Pakistan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NA	Northern Alliance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSA	National Security Advisor
NSC	National Security Council
OBL	Osama bin Laden
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PSM	Psycho-Social Milieu
TB	Taliban

TTP	Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WWII	World War Two

## **Chapter One**

# **INTRODUCTION**

The introductory chapter is in several parts. It first provides an explanation of the importance of the four decisions. Next it discusses the aims and objectives, followed by a section covering the organisation of the study. The last section describes the rationale and motivation of the research.

## **1.1. THE FOUR DECISIONS**

Four key developmental turning points in US Afghan policy, each marking a change in US Afghan strategy, are identified and examined to provide an analysis of United States (US) foreign policy towards Afghanistan. Following the 9/11 terrorist atrocities, the first decision produced the resulting Global War on Terror (GWOT) policy, with its first stop being Afghanistan. It is crucial to analyse the decision, since it was the first turning point in US Afghan policy. The second turning point occurred when the Bush Administration, having toppled the Taliban (TB) regime, made the decision in early 2002 to employ a counterterrorism strategy (CT-S). The strategy, lasting until late-2008 and early 2009, proved disastrous when it met reality in Afghanistan. It deserves consideration since it lasted for almost the entire length of the Bush Administration and is seen to be the cause of most shortcomings in Afghanistan. The third turning point was marked when President Obama in late-2009 endorsed the deployment of additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan, and, by many accounts, approved a counter-insurgency strategy (COIN-S). The decision deserves consideration because it not only signifies a key turning point, but also shows the debate over the Afghanistan War in a different light. In June 2011, Obama made the decision to begin to withdraw US troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2014, thus signalling the final turning point in US Afghan policy.

## **1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The overall aim of this study is to provide a rich-in-detail analysis of American foreign policy towards Afghanistan from its intervention to exit. To do so, the thesis identifies four decisions made over the course of eleven years by an extensive decision-making process in Washington, D.C. Each decision demonstrates a key developmental turning point in US Afghan policy. Using the Foreign Policy Decision-Making (FPDM) Approach as an analytical framework for Foreign Policy Analysis, the research analyses decision-making in an attempt to provide answers for the 'what, how and why' questions regarding each of the four developmental decisions. As part of the requirements of the FPDM Approach, it further examines the impact of human decision-makers, their personal attributes, bureaucratic positions, the milieu in which they operated, and domestic influences upon decision-making and hence each of the four resulting decisions. A thorough examination of decision-making, including the three causal factors, is hoped to assist the thesis in its goal of providing a meticulous analysis of US foreign policy towards Afghanistan from the launching of the GWOT in Afghanistan to its decision to begin to end the involvement in 2011.

## **1.3. ORGANISATION OF RESEARCH**

The research is divided into seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter, chapter two consists of three parts: an analysis of FPA as a theory, a critique, and scrutiny of the relevant literature. The theory part of the chapter examines FPA and the approaches it has adopted over the years. It further provides a detailed explanation of what the FPDM Approach is and how it is applied to inform the present study. The second part critiques the FPDM Approach. The literature review part divides the literature on US Afghan policy towards Afghanistan into four phases, each focusing on work developed in response to each of the four decisions covered. In examining these works, the chapter aims to highlight controversies, disagreements, and different viewpoints. In addition to the four phases, the chapter identifies another area of literature that disagrees on US motives for its involvement in Afghanistan.

The decision to intervene in Afghanistan in late-2001 is the subject of chapter three. Attempts are made to explain why and how the decision was taken in spite of the policymakers being apprehensive about the Afghans' sensitivity towards invading powers. A

subjective analysis is provided to explain a mixture of personal attributes of the policymakers, especially of President Bush, domestic pressure to 'do something' in response to the 9/11 atrocities, and bureaucratic 'locations' of Rumsfeld and Cheney, all of which resulted in the decision to intervene in Afghanistan. The chapter also explores the 'what' question regarding the strategy by spelling out the GWOT strategy as well as its 'revolutionary' objectives.

After the overthrow of the Taliban regime, the Bush Administration, in early 2002, decided on a CT-S. However, by the end of the administration, Bush tilted towards a counter-insurgency strategy, marking a second turning point in US foreign policy towards Afghanistan. Employing the FPDM Approach, chapter four, the second longest chapter, attempts to explain how and why the decision to employ a CT-S was made and what independent variables later influenced the Bush Administration to opt for a COIN-S. It concludes that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Vice-President Richard Cheney, and the neoconservatives influenced President Bush to approve the CT-S in 2002. But the strategy was based on false assumptions. After the strategy failing at the implementation phase, and after meeting considerable domestic criticisms, President Bush leaned towards a COIN-S in 2008. The chapter concludes that bureaucratic politics, personal characteristics of policymakers, Bush in particular, and domestic influences are independent variables that affected the decision-making process for the CT-S, and the same causal factors later forced Bush to lean towards a COIN-S.

Chapter five covers Barack Obama's decision to deploy 30,000 US troops to Afghanistan. This chapter, the longest, explains that Obama faced a divided public debate over the Afghanistan War. Like the public debate, he faced a divided Cabinet: the military camp defended the employability of a COIN-S in Afghanistan, while the Vice-President Joe Biden's camp argued that a counterterrorism-plus strategy would work better. Both sides invoked a variety of arguments and assumptions to justify their respective cases. Section one covers the divided public debate, including the views of the two camps. Section two analyses the assumptions and counter-assumptions that the two sides' views carried. Section three explains that the Obama Administration consisted of five groups: the Biden group, the inner circle, the outsiders, the military, and the President. The bureaucratic influences of these groups upon decision-making (and the decision) are considered. Section four concludes that the policymakers' bureaucratic infighting, their personal attributes,

particularly their profoundly divided belief systems and images, and the divided public debate influenced Obama to make concessions and reach for a compromise.

Chapter six covers the withdrawal decision made in 2011. It first examines whether the assumptions of the Af-Pak policy made by the two sides were accurate. It explains that the assumptions made by the military leaders, including David Petraeus and Stanley McChrystal, were false, reducing the influence of the military and actually increasing Biden's standing. Section two points out that the public debate was no longer in favour of an expensive engagement in Afghanistan. Section three analyses the decision to withdraw, concluding that false assumptions, the negative public debate, especially stiffer opposition on the part of Congress, bureaucratic locations of policymakers, especially David Petraeus's weak position by 2011, and Obama's 'belief system' that the Afghanistan War should be brought to a responsible but quick end, are causal factors reflected in the decision to draw down.

#### **1.4. RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION**

This study is vital for five reasons. Firstly, it covers the entire US involvement in Afghanistan, which lasted two administrations, by being able to identify key developmental turning points in US Afghan policy. Secondly, a large part of the literature available on US involvement in Afghanistan is focused on US policy as an *output*, but this study explores the decision-making *process*. As will be seen in the literature review chapter, there is very little literature that covers decision-making towards Afghanistan for both Bush and Obama Administrations. The four decisions – the first and second were made by the Bush Administration, and the third and fourth by the Obama Administration, and each decision marked a key developmental turning point in American Afghan policy – were formulated by extensive decision-making in Washington, D.C. Studying their decision-making processes will hopefully provide an original angle as far as an analysis of US Afghan policy is concerned. Analysing the decision-making process and analysing it for both administrations is a *prominent* contribution the thesis hopes to make to the literature.

Thirdly, most opinions and interpretations of events in Afghanistan have been formed by Western perspectives. These opinions and perspectives – largely ignorant of the social, political, cultural, and religious realities of Afghanistan – in turn influenced decision-making in Washington, D.C. Through the 'implementation phase' of decision-making, or through the



theme of ‘false assumptions’, the author, due to his command of both Afghan languages, Pashto and Dari, draws on Afghan points of view by exploring Afghan sources. Bringing in Afghan views, particular those of President Hamid Karzai, to analyse the accuracy of policymakers’ assumptions is *another* prominent contribution of this thesis.

Penultimately, there are disagreements in the literature about why the US intervened in Afghanistan. A variety of possible motives and interests are offered. While it is not the direct intention of this study to do so, as it is primarily occupied with decision-making, it obliquely refutes all these contradicting claims. By analysing the decision-making process of the four decisions, it becomes abundantly clear that the *driving force* behind the American foreign policy towards Afghanistan from its intervention in 2001 to its exit in 2011 has been nothing but to prevent further terrorist attacks, especially those involving nuclear weapons. It was self-defence or, to be precise, *preventative* self-defence. It might, due to the not very important nature of the issue in Western literature, offer limited contribution to the literature on US foreign policy in English, but it would play a significant role in the Afghan literature on US Afghan policy when I finally translate this thesis into both Dari and Pashto.

Finally, there is disagreement on the nature of US foreign policy: that is, whether a decision employed a CT-S or a COIN-S, or a nation-building or a non-nation-building strategy. This is particularly true in relation to two of the four decisions. The employability of the FPDM Approach enables this thesis to determine what exactly US strategy was at each turning point.

## **THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **PART ONE: FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS AS AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK OR APPROACH**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is divided into three parts: the theoretical survey, a critique of the Foreign Policy Decision-Making (FPDM) Approach, and the literature review. This part deals with the former. It is composed of five sections. Section one reviews what Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) is. Section two then briefly explains some of the approaches adopted in FPA. However, those approaches— namely, the Psycho-Social Milieu (PSM) Approach and the Bureaucratic Politics (BP) Approach – that have relevance to the present thesis are dealt with in more detail. In section three, the FPDM Approach utilised in this thesis is explained in detail. Section four gives an explanation as to how the FPDM Approach is applied to inform the present study of United States (US) foreign policy (FP) towards Afghanistan, followed by the conclusion of the chapter. Section five provides an explanation of the methodology that this thesis has adopted.

#### **2.1.1. FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS AS A SUBFIELD TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

While many International Relations (IR) theories focus mostly on the nation state as the level of analysis to explain foreign policy or foreign policy behaviour, its cousin or subfield, FPA, focuses on the study of dealing with human decision-makers, acting singly or within groups, as well as those factors that influence the policymakers when making foreign policy.<sup>1</sup> Put differently, FPA treats foreign policy as the product of a number of actors and structures, both domestic and international. Although FPA is mainly interested in those actors, who are in a position of authority and responsible for taking decisions in foreign policy, it can also consider those, whether domestic or non-domestic, who do not have formal responsibility. As long as their actions and words can be demonstrated to have

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Steve, Amelia Hadfield, and Timothy Dunne. 2008. *Foreign policy: theories, actors, cases*. Oxford [England]: Oxford University Press, P.12.

influenced the decision-making process and hence the resulting policy, they are relevant to the analysis of policymaking. Actors, or what Graham Allison has called 'players', are considered to include the President, career diplomats at the State Department, the military at the Pentagon, intelligence services, political aides or advisors, political parties, political action groups, powerful/influential individuals, such as the Senate Majority Leader or chairman of one of the committees in Congress, members of the media and press, and area experts or opinion-makers from domestic interest groups/lobbying firms/think-tanks.<sup>2</sup> Structures are omnipresent in societies, and they include 'political, cultural, psychological, economic, national, regional, global, technological, ideational, cognitive, and normative in type, to name just some of the most important'.<sup>3</sup>

Numerous approaches/models have been developed in FPA, differing in their focus on 'explanandum' of foreign policy (*what* is to be explained/units or objects of analysis/or dependent variable); some are focused on the *process* of policymaking, while others on the *policy* itself.<sup>4</sup> The same has been even more the case in relation to the application of 'explanans' of foreign policy (*how* to be explained/causal factors/or independent variables) in order to account for foreign policy decisions. In FPA the explanans are *multifactorial* and derived from *multilevels*, from all three level of analysis – individual, state and international – as all of them are of interest to the analyst as long as they affect the decision-making process.<sup>5</sup> FPA is *multidisciplinary*<sup>6</sup> as it derives insights from all intellectual disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, and organisational behaviour. FPA therefore is the most *integrative* theoretical field. FPA refuses to 'black box' actors. On the contrary, it puts emphasis on the agent or agency (i.e. the actor) as opposed to the state. It is the actor who has agency, not the state, as the state is an abstraction. FPA therefore is agent-orientated or an *actor-specific* theory.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Hudson, Valeria M. 2007. *Foreign policy analysis: classic and contemporary theory*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Pub, pp.4, 127-128; Hill, Christopher. 2003. *The changing politics of foreign policy*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 52; Allison, Graham T., and Philip Zelikow. 1999. *Essence of decision: explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. New York: Longman, p. 296.

<sup>3</sup> Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., p. 86.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>5</sup>Neack, Laura, Jeanne A. K. Hey, and Patrick Jude Haney. 1995. *Foreign policy analysis: continuity and change in its second generation*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, pp. 11, 17.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Hudson, op. cit., p. 6; Smith, Hadfield, and Dunne (2008), op. cit., p. 89; Hermann, Charles F., Charles W. Kegley, and James N. Rosenau. 1986. *New directions in the study of foreign policy*. Boston: Allen and Unwin, p. 205; Sprout, Harold, and Margaret Sprout. 1965. *The ecological perspective on human affairs, with specially*

Below, a number of approaches are examined to show how integrative (multifactorial, multilevel, multidisciplinary) and agent-orientated FPA has been in its approach.

### **2.1.2. APPROACHES FOCUSING ON VARIABLES AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF ANALYSIS**

One of the most important approaches has been the Psycho-Social Milieu (PSM) Approach. Founded by Harold and Margaret Sprout, this approach claimed that foreign policy could be explained by referring to the psychosocial milieu (the psychological, situational, political, and social contexts or environments) of those who are involved in decision-making.<sup>8</sup> For the psychological aspect of the PSM Approach, FPA focused on the decision-makers' minds (that is, what happened in the minds of policymakers during the decision), as 'mind' contains personalities, 'beliefs, attitudes, values, experiences, emotions, style, memory, national and self-conception'.<sup>9</sup> Especially under certain conditions – notably, high stress, high uncertainty, war, crisis, or the dominant position of the head of the state<sup>10</sup> – individual characteristics are claimed to play an important part in terms of understanding why certain policies were made. Individual characteristics are considered to be the 'integral aspect' of the decision-making process.<sup>11</sup> One of the most focused causal factors has been the belief system and images of policymakers, because beliefs 'are major sources of behaviour and, therefore, explain and predict human action'.<sup>12</sup> The belief system and images reveal how a policymaker perceives, interprets, and processes information on a particular decision. While 'belief system' means one's conviction or even ideology, 'images' here refer to the images of others (e.g. of the Taliban or Al Qaeda in Afghanistan) held by individual policymakers (e.g. President Bush or Obama).<sup>13</sup> Beliefs and images develop over years. Personal experience plays a crucial part in the development. Wayne writes: 'As

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*reference to international politics*, by Harold and Margaret Sprout. Princeton, N. J.: Published for the Princeton Centre of International Studies by the Princeton Univ. Press, p. 203.

<sup>8</sup> Sprout (1965), op. cit., pp.1-18, 203-225, especially, 11, 203-204, 224; Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., p. 14; Hill, op. cit., pp. 109-116.

<sup>9</sup> Rosati, Jerel, 'A cognitive approach to the study of foreign policy', in Neack, Hey, and Haney, op. cit., pp. 13, 64; Powell, Charles. A, James W. Dyson and Helen E. Purkitt, 'Opening the 'Black Box': Cognitive processing and optimal choice in foreign policy decision making', in Hermann, Kegley and Rosenau, op. cit., p. 206.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 207; Smith, Hadfield, and Dunne, op.cit., p. 20.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Rosati, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 60-64.

people become aware of the world around them and seek to understand it, they formulate views that frame the mindset from which their judgments are made. Their views and beliefs also shape their perceptions of reality; they are guides to decision making.<sup>14</sup> Those 'mind-related' studies challenge the assumption that policymakers always act rationally.

For the 'social' aspect of the PSM Approach, FPA concentrates on how societal and national characteristics (societal and national context or national attributes) can shape the environment in which policymakers operate, and how then the environment influences the policymakers.<sup>15</sup> These attributes include: culture, national role conception, history, geography, economy, political institutions, and military power.<sup>16</sup>

The *milieu* of decision-making also includes domestic politics or domestic influences.<sup>17</sup> Policymakers are said to be engaged in a two-level game, domestic and international. The domestic game includes pressures from domestic political factors/actors, which policymakers constantly cope with (together with pressures from the international environment). Domestic political factors, or what this thesis terms 'domestic influences', can 'constrain, prevent, change, or even facilitate foreign policy change',<sup>18</sup> or, at times, even pose a threat to the very survival of the government. Domestic pressure could emanate from a variety of actors or societal groups, including Congress (through its ratification and fund allocations authorities), media, area experts and ordinary Americans. They all have the ability to influence the foreign policy atmosphere and to shape public debate. These external actors' contributions have been shown to have affected governmental foreign policy decision-making.<sup>19</sup>

The Sprouts referred to this broad (psychosocial) context as the *milieu* of decision-making. The milieu is the operational environment or context as it is *perceived* and *interpreted* by decision-makers. It is policymakers' perceptions and reactions to the milieu,

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<sup>14</sup> Wayne, Stephen J., 'Presidential Character and Judgment: Obama's Afghanistan and Health Care Decisions', *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 41, no. 2 (June), 2011, pp. 291- 305, p. 293.

<sup>15</sup> Sprout (1965), op. cit., pp. 48-70, 201-225, especially, 52, 205.

<sup>16</sup> Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., p. 23; Hill, op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>17</sup> Hagan, Joe D., 'Domestic Political Explanation in the Analysis of Foreign Policy', in Neack, Hey, and Haney, op. cit., pp. 117-143.

<sup>18</sup> Neack, Hey, and Haney, op. cit., p. 120.

<sup>19</sup> Dahl, Robert Alan. 1973. *Regimes and oppositions*: edited by Robert A. Dahl. New Haven: London, Yale university press, pp. 1-25; Hagan, Joe D., 'Regimes, Political Oppositions, and the Comparative Analysis of Foreign Policy', in Hermann, Charles F., Charles W. Kegley, and James N. Rosenau. 1986. *New directions in the study of foreign policy*. Boston: Allen & Unwin, pp. 339, 343, 348-349; Holsti, K. J. 1967. *International politics; a framework for analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, pp. 422-423; Cox, Michael, and Doug Stokes. 2008. *US foreign policy*. Oxford: Oxford University, pp. 164-166; Hudson, op. cit., p. 133.

not the milieu as it is, or as someone else perceives or interprets it.<sup>20</sup> Thus, like the FPDM Approach (explained below), it, too, is a *subjective* approach, as the analyst is to discern how the policymakers perceived and responded in a particular milieu, or in other words, how policymakers defined the situation in which they made the decision. Like the FPDM Approach, it is a decision-making model, and hence the analysis of the influence of environmental factors upon policymakers while making a particular foreign policy is a must.<sup>21</sup> Like the FPDM Approach, multilevel analysis, both from the most micro to the most macro, is required. Like the FPDM Approach, it is important to know the particularities of human decision-makers and the context in which they make the decision. Put differently, part of the understanding of the subjective situation lies in the explanation of policymakers' personal attributes, values, perceptions, belief systems and images, personality, and emotional traits.<sup>22</sup> Another part of it could include variables or sources of foreign policy such as cultural perspectives, national role conception, and domestic influences.

The effect of culture and national identity upon foreign policy is another independent variable that numerous studies in FPA, including Brian Ripley in his article on *Cognition, Culture, and Bureaucratic Politics*,<sup>23</sup> have adopted to explain foreign policy choices. Cultural perspectives were shown to have influenced the way institutions, such as bureaucracies, were structured and run;<sup>24</sup> the process of policymaking was demonstrated to have been different from one culture to another.<sup>25</sup>

National and societal characteristics have also been subjected to FPA to demonstrate that they have been important in explaining foreign policy choices. It was said that 'national role conception', that is, how a nation sees its role in the international arena, could influence the nation's behaviour in relation to foreign policy choices.<sup>26</sup> The elite of a nation is conscious of its role in the international arena, and this role conception is said to be in

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<sup>20</sup> Sprout (1965), pp. 48, 52, 83, 207, 224; Zinnes, Dins A., 'Some Evidence Relevant to the Man-Milieu Hypothesis', in Sprout, Harold, Margaret Sprout, James N. Rosenau, Vincent Davis, and Maurica A. East. 1972. *The Analysis of international politics; essays in honour of Harold and Margaret Sprout*. New York: Free Press, p. 210.

<sup>21</sup> Sprout, Rosenau, Davis, and East, op. cit., p. 210.

<sup>22</sup> Neack, Hey, and Haney, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 85-97, p. 89.

<sup>24</sup> Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>25</sup> Sampson III, Martin W., 'Culture Influences on Foreign Policy', in Hermann, Kegley, and Rosenau, op.cit., p. 387.

<sup>26</sup> Hudson, op. cit., p. 24.

turn influenced by the societal characteristics of the nation state the elite come from.<sup>27</sup> In situations where a nation state encounters profound uncertainty, it would ask the question of 'what we should do given who we are'. In such a situation, it was found that nations chose actions more in line with their heroic history than with the norms of rational choice or strategy.<sup>28</sup>

There have been approaches involving the effect of large and small group decision-making on foreign policy. Most decisions relating to foreign policy are made in small group settings, and one of the popular approaches has considered the effect of the dynamic of 'small group of decision-makers' (about ten or more policymakers) upon foreign policy. One analysis of a number of small group decisions by Irving L. Janis, entitled *Groupthink*, discovered that there was always fear of exclusion and rejection by members of the group, and the primary purpose became to keep the group cohesive. As this occurred, there was the existence of 'groupthink', meaning the purpose of keeping the group cohesive replaced the purpose for which the group was built. Decisions were made, even though some members of the group did not agree but went ahead anyway for fear of exclusion. This had significant consequences for the group process, which in turn had ramifications for foreign policy choices.<sup>29</sup>

Analysis has also been conducted at the organisational process level. For this approach, the government consists of many organisations, each with a life of its own. These organisations, their standard pattern of behaviours (known as 'standard operating procedures' or 'SOPs'), their purposes and the practices common to members of these organisations, are under scrutiny. SOPs are shown to have influenced foreign policy. SOPs are shaped and driven by the organisation's turf, resources, influence, mission, vision and many other factors. Organisations always fight for turf, resources and influence. Where a decision negatively affected any of the above, the organisation looked for ways not to implement the policy, resulting (numerous times over the years) in complaints by US

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 104-105.

<sup>29</sup> Janis, Irving L. 1982. *Groupthink: psychological studies of policy decisions and fiascoes*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, pp. 1-13.

presidents or secretaries.<sup>30</sup> Thus the organisational process has been proven to have had implications for foreign policy choices.

Another very popular approach involved the effect of bureaucratic politics on foreign policy. In the BP Approach, also known as the Governmental Politics Model – an approach that gained impetus during and after the Vietnam War, a period when policy was said to have failed because of bureaucratic necessities<sup>31</sup> – the focus is on those players involved in the government. Players are those individuals ‘whose roles, expertise, or sheer political power coupled with strong interest allow them to affect bureaucratic outcome’.<sup>32</sup> Graham Allison, arguably the founder of this approach, asserts that it is actor-oriented, not concerned with a structural view of the field, and hence focuses on *interaction* between players representing different bureaucracies, who are involved in a bargaining game called politics,<sup>33</sup> similar to a zero-sum game in which one bureaucracy’s winning is considered the loss of another bureaucracy. Organisations or bureaucracies (sometimes different offices or individuals within one organisation) are in constant rivalry against each other, proposing solutions and ideas to the problem at hand, and, if one bureaucracy’s proposals turn into policy, this would involve utilising its sources and elevating its importance. These organisations/bureaucracies are said to hold different interests and perceptions, and they place their own survival at the top of their list of priorities. The survival is measured by relative influence *vis-à-vis* other organisations (‘turf’), by the organisation’s budget, and by the morale of its personnel.<sup>34</sup> The organisation jealously protects and strives to increase its turf and strength, and preserves undiluted what it feels to be its ‘essence’ or ‘mission’.<sup>35</sup> Turf gives him or her formal responsibility and authority. Responsibility and authority strengthen position. A strong position breeds more power, and more power in bureaucratic politics provides a player with ‘effective influence on government decisions and actions’.<sup>36</sup>

In contrast to the Rational Actor Model, which sees the whole government as one *rational* actor (like classical realism, it assumes that policymakers always act in a rational

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<sup>30</sup>Allison and Zelikow, op. cit., pp. 143-185, 153 and 177; Hudson, op. cit., p. 77; Wittkopf, Eugene R., Charles W. Kegley, James M. Scott and Charles W. Kegley. 2002. *American Foreign Policy: Pattern and Processes*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, pp. 476-482.

<sup>31</sup>Hudson, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>33</sup>Graham and Zelikow, op. cit., pp. 255-313, p. 300.

<sup>34</sup>Smith, Hadfield, and Dunne, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Graham and Zelikow, op. cit., p. 300.



manner and choose the rational alternatives) or the Organisational Model, which sees the action as an organisational *output*, the BP Approach, as mentioned above, treats the policymaking process as a game that players from different bureaucracies play. The players' behaviours (statements, actions, bargaining, preferences) are *driven* mainly (but not *entirely*) by organisational interests and eventually shape foreign policy. They make government decisions not by a single, rational choice but by 'pulling and hauling that is politics'.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, decisions take the form of *resultant*,<sup>38</sup> and hence it is different from what any person or group initially intended (or *purposive* act); decisions take the form of resultants not in terms of given preferences and strategic moves (as in rational choice thinking), 'but according to the power and performance of proponents and opponents of the action in question'.<sup>39</sup> It is determined in accordance with the position that the individual concerned occupies within the decision-making apparatus (and on his willingness to assume responsibility and, if need be, threaten to resign if he sees his turf threatened), and therefore the golden rule is 'where you stand depends on where you sit'.<sup>40</sup>

The power or authority held by the players is mainly *bureaucratic* rather than personal; that is, the players represent the organisation's interests and the interests of groups close to the organisation. Walter Carlsnaes argues that, unlike in cognitive/psychological approaches, policymakers (or the players) are said not to be influenced by their own ideas and interests.<sup>41</sup> Hollis and Smith go a step further by claiming that the BP Approach treats the actors as 'mere puppets [of the organisations that they represent]'.<sup>42</sup> Graham and Zelikow, however, make it clear that, although in the Organisational Behaviour Model the identities of the individuals are completely irrelevant, as the organisational routines are designed in a way to achieve this irrelevance, in the BP Approach the individuals are the ambassadors of their organisations to the rest of the government and their personal views or judgments (e.g. on what is the best choice for them, the organisation and the

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<sup>37</sup> Carlsnaes, Walter, Thomas Risse-Kappen, and Beth A. Simmons. 2002. *Handbook of international relations*. London: SAGE Publications, p. 338.

<sup>38</sup> Graham and Zelikow, op.cit., p. 256; Carlsnaes, Risse-Kappen, and Simmons, op.cit., p. 338; Hill, op.cit., pp. 85-92; Hollis and Smith, op.cit., pp. 146-170.

<sup>39</sup> Graham and Zelikow, op. cit., p. 256.

<sup>40</sup> Halperin, Morton H. 2006. *Bureaucratic politics and foreign policy*. Second edition. *The Brookings Institution*; Hudson, op. cit., p. 90; Hollis and Smith, op. cit., p. 148.

<sup>41</sup> Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., p. 95.

<sup>42</sup> Hollis and Smith, op. cit., p. 168.

government), as well as their command of the bargaining skills, *do* matter.<sup>43</sup> Hence Graham and Zelikow, as well as other scholars, make allowance for the personal views/beliefs and skills of the players themselves, as players have different personalities, operating styles and commitments to certain groups but not to others, and they act 'according to various conceptions of national, organisational, and personal goals'.<sup>44</sup> In short, like the FPDM and PSM Approaches, BP is a subjective approach and the personal skills/views/judgments/beliefs of policymakers (and their clashes of personalities) do matter, but what should be taken into consideration is that these personal characteristics are made *within* a structure (bureaucracy).

So far, the 'core' of FPA has been examined, namely, sources or 'explanans' involving psychological factors, domestic politics and opposition, cultural effects, national and societal characteristics, small group effects, and bureaucratic politics. These are all micro-level theories of foreign policy decision-making. There are numerous studies that have examined forces at the macro level. Macro-level causal factors are mostly considered by IR theory, such as national attributes and the international system. Natural resources, geography, population characteristics, size, military and economic capabilities and many other resources are elements of the power of a nation state, and studies have been conducted to show they have had direct relevance to, and effect upon, foreign policy choices.<sup>45</sup> The macro level also includes the system level of analysis, which examines the nature of the system consisting of all the nation states. The most widely accepted theory is realism, in which, generally speaking, policymakers are assumed to be rational: that is, they think and act in terms of national interest defined in terms of power<sup>46</sup> and in turn defined as social influence, control, resources or material wealth.<sup>47</sup> The concept of power enables one to understand the action of policymakers regardless of their intentions or views.<sup>48</sup> While FPA accepts that system does affect foreign policy, its acceptance is conditional: systemic forces are relevant so long as they are shown to have affected policymakers while making

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<sup>43</sup>Graham and Zelikow, op. cit., p. 273.

<sup>44</sup>Graham and Zelikow, op. cit., pp. 255, 273; Hudson, op. cit., pp. 91-93; Neack, Hey, and Haney, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>45</sup> Neack, Hey and Haney, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>46</sup>Hollis, Martin, and Steve Smith. 1990. *Explaining and understanding international relations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 25.

<sup>47</sup> Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>48</sup>Hollis and Smith, op. cit., p. 25.

decisions, because states only act through individual actors.<sup>49</sup> FPA only allows a bottom-up analysis (from unit to system) as opposed to a top-down one (from system to unit). There is a ground (the conceptualisation of the foundational level at which phenomena in the field occur) for every theoretical discipline.<sup>50</sup> In IR, states are the unitary actors and are the ground of IR, but in FPA the ground is human decision-makers, acting singly or as a group, who cannot be classified as unitary rational actors, and who are not the same as the states; a state is a metaphysical abstraction<sup>51</sup> and hence cannot be realistically conceptualised as a ground of IR.

It has been seen that FPA ‘theory...is rich, detailed, multilevel, multidisciplinary, and centered on foreign policy *decisionmaking*...as it is performed by human beings [emphasis added]’.<sup>52</sup> It should be the case, as in the real world, that both actors and structures influence foreign policy decision-making. It is therefore only realistic to apply a theoretical model from the subfield of FPA as a conceptual approach to inform my study of US foreign policy towards Afghanistan. The approach this thesis applies is the FPDM Approach, as founded by Snyder and developed by other FPA scholars. The approach is explained in detail in the next section, and a further explanation is provided in the following section as to how it is applied.

### 2.1.3. THE FPDM APPROACH

The focus in this approach is on the *actors* themselves and the *process* of decision-making. For Richard C. Snyder and his colleagues, the studying of *decision-making* included the investigation of the three determinants: the competence of the actors involved, their motivations, and the communication during the decision-making process.<sup>53</sup> For them, the analysis of the decision-making process provided a way of ‘organising the determinants of action around those officials who acted for the political society’.<sup>54</sup> Since their approach focused centrally on foreign policy decision-making *process*, as opposed to FP *outcomes*, it

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<sup>49</sup>Hudson, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>51</sup>Snyder, C. Richard, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin. 1962. *Foreign policy decision-making*. The Free Press of Glencoe, pp. 85-86; Hudson, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>52</sup>Hudson, op. cit., p. 165.

<sup>53</sup>Snyder, Bruck and Sapin, op. cit., pp. 86-92.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid; Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., p. 13.

became known as Foreign Policy Decision-Making, abbreviated as FPDM. This thesis will, therefore, refer to FPDM as an 'approach' within the subfield of FPA.

For process, the analyst focuses on what the foreign policy decision-makers are really *doing*, as by so doing they are participating in the dynamic process of decision-making.<sup>55</sup> The conceptualisation of *decision-making*<sup>56</sup> as a unit of analysis provides answers for foreign policy behaviours; behaviours include intentions, statements, actions, inactions, decisions, indecisions – in fact, any 'resultant' of policymakers during the decision-making process, and the response of other actors to these intentions, statements, actions, inactions, decisions and indecisions.<sup>57</sup> If one wishes 'to probe the "why" questions relating to foreign policy behaviours, then decision-making analysis is certainly necessary. We should go as far as to say that the "why" questions cannot be answered without analysis of decision-making'.<sup>58</sup> Laura Neack, like Snyder and Hudson, emphasises that it is essential that the study of foreign policy considers '*how* certain goals arise and *why* certain behaviours result'.<sup>59</sup> To answer these questions, the study should highlight factors that are shown to have impacted the process 'by which policy (statements and behaviours) is made'.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, in decision-making, unrelated 'internal and external causal factors' (including some that were treated as irrelevant in mainstream IR) become relevant provided they are shown to have influenced the actors and consequently the policymaking process and thus the resultant policy.<sup>61</sup> One way to determine these factors is to scrutinise reasons given by policymakers for a foreign policy choice or behaviour, as reasons could reveal their *motives*.<sup>62</sup> Reasons would answer the question of *why* actors see the world in a certain way and *what* causes their perceptions; their perceptions can be caused by personal characteristics, societal, cultural, historical or other factors, including the international system.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, decision-making is viewed as 'operating in a dual-aspect setting': the decision-makers and their internal domestic environment and the external factors shaping their choices. For Snyder and his colleagues, it was not the laws of power maximisation, but rather how the individual

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<sup>55</sup>Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., p. 88; Hudson, op. cit., p. 165.

<sup>56</sup>Snyder, Bruck and Sapin, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>57</sup>Neack, Hey, and Haney, op. cit., p. 18; Smith, Hadfield, and Dunne, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>58</sup>Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>59</sup>Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, op. cit., pp. 85-86.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.; Hollis and Smith, op. cit., p. 145.

<sup>63</sup>Hollis and Smith, op. cit., p. 145.

decision-makers *defined* the situation; the FPDM Approach has a subjective outlook, as it tries to understand the perceptions of those who are involved in policymaking, and tries to re-create their 'definition of the situation'.<sup>64</sup> Snyder and his colleagues make it clear that '*All attempts to describe and explain human behaviour require what has already transpired to be recaptured— not in all its original detail, but selectively according to a scheme employed by the reporter or observer.*'<sup>65</sup>

As has been seen in the previous subsection, some scholars see individual actors as important in terms of explaining a given foreign policy, whereas others give priority to structures or structural factors.<sup>66</sup> Others combine both, seeking to integrate different levels of analysis. However, the FPDM Approach takes 'all possible factors which may play a role in the general activity of foreign policy decision-making'<sup>67</sup> in order to recapture what has 'already transpired'. As mentioned above, structural factors play an important part in the FPDM, *only* in so long as they have a direct or indirect effect on policymakers when they make foreign policy. In short, like FPA, the FPDM Approach is rich, detailed, multifactorial, multilevel, multidisciplinary, and centred on foreign policy *decision-making* as it is performed by human beings. Indeed, the main focus of the FPDM Approach is on actors. Contrary to most IR theories, which, generally speaking, view the state as the sole and independent actor in foreign policy, the FPDM Approach sees states as institutional *structures* within which, and on behalf of which, the decision-makers act. The 'ground' in the FPDM is human decision-makers.

#### **2.1.4. APPLICATION OF THE FPDM APPROACH IN THE PRESENT THESIS**

One element that the FPDM Approach (and most approaches in FPA in general) stresses as essential is the importance of understanding individual *policymakers*, their *particularities* and the *context* in which they operate in order to understand foreign policy choices. In the FPDM Approach the focus is on policymakers and the causal variables – including psychological and societal – that affect them during the process of making foreign policy. In

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid., pp. 144-145.

<sup>65</sup>Snyder, Bruck and Sapin, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>66</sup>Hill, Christopher. 2003. *The changing politics of foreign policy*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave McMillan, pp. 19-24.

<sup>67</sup>Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., p. 96.

the FPDM Approach (and FPA) it is human beings and their characteristics (what Snyder called “human” factors in explaining foreign policy of a state) that matter.<sup>68</sup>

Another element that the FPDM Approach requires as a must is the analysis of the decision-making process. Patrick J. Haney in his article on *Structure and Process in the Analysis of Foreign Policy Crises*<sup>69</sup> defines the term ‘process’ as ‘the steps and tasks performed by a group that lead to a decision or policy choice being made’. In plain language, the term ‘process’ means the way a decision was formed, that is, who said *what, how* and *why* when the policy was made. In FPDM (and FPA), the *process* of foreign policy decision-making is seen as important, if not more important, as foreign policy as an *output*. The substance of this message continues to be the ‘hardcore’<sup>70</sup> of FPDM (and FPA), and is the ‘hardcore’ of this thesis, too.

To sum up, the ‘explanandum’ of this study is the decision-making process for the abovementioned four decisions. The impact of personal characteristics of policymakers, mainly their belief systems and images that also encompasses the decision-making style,<sup>71</sup> their bureaucratic locations and personal ties, and domestic factors or influences (namely, the responses of Congress, the media, area experts/political interest groups, and the ordinary Americans who would *jointly* form the public debate, which in turn help shed some light on the ‘milieu’) is considered upon the decision-making *process* of the four decisions towards Afghanistan, and hence the resulting decisions themselves. These three independent variables are covered as part of the requirements of external and internal factors of the FPDM Approach.

In his article, *Conclusion: reaching foreign policy cases*,<sup>72</sup> Steven L. Lamy gives an ideal framework for learning about the process of foreign policy decision-making. He divides the process into four phases: articulation/initiation, formulation, implementation, and evaluation. In the first phase, *initiation*, the analyst focuses on those players – such as national-interest groups, media, civil society, or even public debate/pressure, to name a few – who bring the issues to the attention of the policymakers. This stage gives an understanding of who the key players are, why they push a particular

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<sup>68</sup>Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, op. cit., p. 36; Hudson, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>69</sup>Neack, Hey, and Haney, op. cit., p. 106.

<sup>70</sup>Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>71</sup>Wayne, op. cit., p. 293.

<sup>72</sup>Smith, Hadfield, and Dunne, op. cit., pp. 377-387.

recommendation/proposal/view, and how they do so. In the *formulation* phase, a phase when the policy is made/formulated, the analyst learns about *how* and *why* the policy was made – who said *what*, *how* and *why*. Here one can ask numerous conceptual questions which are found below. The third phase, *implementation*, is about what happens after the policy is formed: that is, what happened after the policy was translated into action at domestic and international levels. Was the policy successful? If not, why not? In the final stage, the *evaluation* phase, the views, reviews and recommendations of a policy (or its outcome) by the Congressional committees, watchdog groups, or special commissions, as well as other influential actors, including the media, can be considered. ‘Cases may be written about all or one of these phases of policymaking. Each phase will reveal the significance of various actors, decisions rules, procedures, practices, and habits.’<sup>73</sup> Indeed, a researcher does not have to follow all four phases in chronological order to find a foreign policy explanation. Some phases might be irrelevant to a particular decision point. For example, the evaluation stage would not be as relevant to the decision to intervene in Afghanistan in 2001 as the formulation stage. In the present study, for each of the four key developmental turning points in US foreign policy towards Afghanistan, the focus is on the formulation phase of a decision, as this is the phase in which the study discovers answers to the ‘what, how and why’ questions. However, considerations from the other phases inevitably become relevant. For example, President Obama considered sending more troops (formulating the decision) because the military wanted a heavy involvement (initiation) in Afghanistan, as the US strategy to defeat terrorism and destroy the Taliban in Afghanistan had not succeeded over the years (implementation), and had been met with considerable criticism (evaluation). In the formulation phase, the analysis is both *descriptive* and *analytical*, but when consideration is drawn from the other phases, it can also be *evaluative*.

The organising concepts for this research are arranged as strands in the answers to a number of guiding questions inspired by the FPDM Approach.<sup>74</sup> They include: who brought the issue to the attention of policymakers, and how, and why? Which policymakers were involved in the process of the decision-making? Who said what, why, and how during the processes of decision-making? How were problems/discussions/situations ‘framed’ and ‘represented’ by policymakers? How did policymakers recognise the problem: for example,

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid., pp. 383-384.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

the imminent threats of further attacks by al Qaeda post-9/11? What motivated the policymakers to come to share an assumption/interpretation of the situation (for example, post-9/11 the assumption became that the US was only safe by taking offensive actions)? And what (and how and why) motivated policymakers to *change* an established interpretation/assumption (prior to 9/11 terrorist attacks, the assumption was that the US was safe by taking a defensive stance)? Which policymakers put forward the options? How were these options then developed? What reasoning did he or she give? What were their objectives and how did they arise? What were the motivations behind the objectives and how did they arise? What internal and external factors influenced policymakers and their objectives and motivations?

The last question allows the thesis to examine factors derived from the implementation and evaluation stages. The requirement of 'external and internal factors' of the FPDM Approach will also allow for considering causal psychological or social factors or independent variables covered by the PSM and BP Approaches. As stated above, the PSM and BP Approaches are an extension of the FPDM Approach.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, studies relating belief systems and images have developed their own conceptual questions. The concepts in this thesis could be organised as patterns in the answers to the following questions inspired by Jerel A. Rosati in *A Cognitive Approach to the Study of Foreign Policy*:<sup>76</sup> What were the belief systems of the policymakers? What impact did the beliefs and images of policymakers have on foreign policymaking (for the four decisions) towards Afghanistan? What affected the beliefs and images of policymakers over time? As for the guiding questions relating to domestic influences, the reaction of Congress, the media, the area experts, and ordinary Americans are analysed regarding each of the four decisions. The views of all those four actors constitute public opinion (or debate), and the organising concept for studying public opinion is to simply to ascertain what public opinion on the making of each of the four decisions was.<sup>77</sup>

As stated above, as a third causal factor this thesis explores the role of bureaucratic politics upon four decisions. Allison and Zelikow put a number of guiding questions (organising concepts) to help the researcher understand foreign policy from the point of

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<sup>75</sup>Neack, Hey and Haney, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>77</sup>Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., p. 27.



view of a particular bureaucratic actor: 'Who plays [Pentagon, the State Department, the White House, the Central Intelligence Agency...]? What factors shape players' perceptions, preferences, and stands on the issue? What determines each player's impact on the results? How does the game combine players' stands, influence, and moves to yield governmental decisions and actions?'<sup>78</sup> All of those questions could be combined to make one comprehensive question: to what extent did the particular bureaucratic locations of policymakers play a part in the resulting policy?<sup>79</sup> The same question could be asked in relation to belief systems and images as well as domestic influences: to what extent did the belief systems and images (of policymakers) and domestic influences play a part in the resulting policy?

The above *guidelines* or concepts, inspired by the three approaches, are used to find out *what* US Afghan policy towards Afghanistan was at each turning point, and *how* and *why* it was made. The roles of belief systems and images, especially of Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, bureaucratic positions of policymakers, and domestic influences in decision-making are explored to answer the what, how and why questions. These conceptual questions do not represent an exhaustive list, as many more might arise (in later studies). One of the liberating points about the FPDM (and, of course, FPA) is its potential for asking *new* questions.<sup>80</sup> Its tendency not to limit itself to a particular conceptual approach, but to derive middle-range theories from other social science approaches in order to analyse a given foreign policy is its other plus point. Yet another liberating aspect of the FPDM Approach (and FPA) is, as seen above, its commitment to provide multi-explanations by committing to an analysis of all variables (if necessary) at all levels of analysis, from the most micro to the most macro, from the individual to the state to the international system, so long as they are demonstrated to have influenced policymakers. Yet another aspect of the FPDM Approach (and FPA) is that it is more of a common sense theory as opposed to strictly theoretical and technical;<sup>81</sup> its flexibility makes it much easier for a researcher to manoeuvre. For example, as explained above, 'the internal and external factors

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<sup>78</sup>Graham and Zelikow, op. cit., p. 296.

<sup>79</sup>Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., 227.

<sup>80</sup>Hudson, op. cit., pp. 31-32; Hermann, Charles F., 'Epilogue: Reflecting on Foreign Policy Theory Building', in Neack, Hey and Haney, op. cit., pp. 243-258; Hermann, Kegley and Rosenau, op. cit., pp. 1-10.

<sup>81</sup>Hermann, Kegley, and Rosenau, op. cit., pp. 1-10; Frankel, Joseph. 1963. *The making of foreign policy; an analysis of decision-making*. London: Oxford University Press.

requirement' of the FPDM Approach would cover all those sources of foreign policy covered by the PSM Approach, or to a certain extent, the BP Approach.

In FPA, the aim is not to create a 'grand theory' of some kind, but rather to use a 'common sense' approach (such as the FPDM) in analysing those sources that affect foreign policy, or foreign policy behaviour. This thesis has identified three causal factors, but there could be many more that have shaped the four decisions. Indeed, later studies might very well explore others.

## CONCLUSION

The application of the FPDM Approach in the present thesis will help ascertain what transpired during the decision-making processes for the four decisions. It will further help identify the causal elements or sources of US Afghan policy: it will shine a light on the impact of the belief system and images of policymakers, as well as domestic influences, upon the four FP choices; and it will bring to the surface whether the bureaucratic positions of the players involved influenced the four decisions about Afghanistan. Such *multilevel foundation* within the *decision-making* context will hopefully provide rich-in-detail answers for the thesis questions regarding American foreign policy towards Afghanistan in the last eleven years.

### 2.1.5. METHODOLOGY

The FPDM Approach requires the researcher to have a person-to-person relationship with policymakers and be physically present during the decision-making process to ascertain detailed accounts of policymakers' characteristics, as well as what transpired during the decision-making process. Then one would be able to find out about the impact of policymakers' bureaucratic contributions, their belief systems and images, as well as domestic influences upon decision-making and the resultants. As Allison, Zelikow, and Hudson put it, none is possible for an analyst.<sup>82</sup> To make matters worse, writing a contemporary piece of foreign policy analysis has its own limitations. Key governmental documents are still classified, and a researcher cannot enjoy the benefit of hindsight. But since there is always a need for contemporary works, as it can still provide the literature with an original insight into contemporary events which subsequent works could build upon,

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<sup>82</sup>Hudson, op. cit., p. 27; Graham and Zelikow, op. cit., p. 312.

these obstacles have not stopped contemporary works from being undertaken. Even better is the fact that the FPDM (and FPA) have identified a clear qualitative method to help the thesis determine 'what transpired' during the decision-making process and identify causal variables that have affected a particular decision at a particular turning point.<sup>83</sup> The method requires that all official actions (such as cables, speeches, statements, memoirs by policymakers), as well as contributions by outside actors about the policy or policymakers, are examined, and, once these pieces of information are stuck to the same canvas, it would constitute governmental behaviour relevant to the issue.<sup>84</sup> This thesis has employed the same method. Using this analytical and descriptive tool, the author was able to describe, analyse, and evaluate what policymakers said and wrote. Materials written by external actors (e.g. experts/area specialists) in regard to policymakers or the four decisions also proved important sources of content analysis. These primary and secondary materials helped investigate what type of decision-making each of the two presidents adopted, how policymakers interacted, what discussions took place during decision-making, what the various ministers and advisors' contributions and personal viewpoints were, what the impact of domestic factors upon each of the participants was, and whose views/bureaucratic locations eventually shaped the four resultants discussed in this thesis.

For primary data, the following were exploited. Firstly, classified documents published by WikiLeaks were explored. Secondly, published memoirs by the officials from the Bush and the Obama Administrations, which had covered the decision-making process for all four turning points, proved rich primary data. The published memoirs facilitated an insider's insight into the decision-making, since the policymakers had written about their own experiences and recollections of the four decisions they had made towards Afghanistan. They shone a light on the detailed discussions, which took place during the making of each of the four decisions. It is true that a policymaker might try to convey only those details that he or she wants the reader to know, and it is also true that a policymaker might defend the stance he or she has taken, but that does not stop the published memoirs from being an invaluable primary source. Reading memoirs by different advisors, especially those who did not agree with each other on numerous aspects of the four decisions in question, and

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<sup>83</sup>Hudson, op. cit., pp. 27, 57; Graham and Zelikow, op. cit., pp. 312-313; Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., p. 24; Neack, Hey, and Haney, op. cit., pp. 11, 59.

<sup>84</sup>Graham and Zelikow, op. cit., pp. 294-295.

comparing and contrasting their accounts of a given policy have enabled this thesis ascertain each advisor's belief system, his or her stance on each decision, the role of his or her bureaucratic position in swaying the policy (and decision-making) one way or another, the role of domestic influences upon him or her, and the nature of a policy (whether it was a counter-insurgency or counterterrorism strategy when the decision was made). Ultimately, the FPDM (and FPA) is a subjective approach, and it is crucial to know policymakers' accounts of the decision-making. The memoirs helped a great deal in unlocking them. The third primary source was public records. Countless statements, interviews, speeches, policy briefs, which officials from both the Bush and the Obama Administrations had made in relation to Afghanistan, were consulted. Some of these interviews and statements were made in the heat of the moment without any previous preparations. Thus they equally helped shed some light on identifying the role of the three independent variables in shaping the four decisions. While the White House official websites helped access the two US presidents' speeches, the Office of the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan enabled the thesis to access President Karzai's speeches, interviews and statements. Fourthly, due to the important and later controversial nature of the Afghanistan War, Congress, especially the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, conducted a great number of hearings that contributed greatly to policymaking. Almost all hearings by the *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations* were accessed, which helped better understand why public debate was shaped one way or another. They, together with opinions, statements, media interviews, and policy suggestions by Congressional members, proved a rich source of analysis in establishing the impact of Congress upon the decision-making for the four decisions. Finally, newspapers and magazines, especially *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*, were really helpful in figuring out what transpired in decision-making and how impactful the three variables were. They were also invaluable in bringing to life the public debate upon each of the decisions.

As for secondary materials, academic articles on Afghanistan by scholars/journalists and those with expertise on the Afghanistan War were studied. *Foreign Affairs* proved to be very helpful in retrieving numerous articles relating to US Afghan policy by influential actors, including former or would-be policymakers. Textbooks on US involvement in Afghanistan, those written not just by Western scholars, but also by Afghans in both Pashto and Dari languages, were exploited. The latter (together with speeches and interviews made by

Karzai) proved very helpful in the analysis of the ‘false assumptions’. These textbooks and academic articles helped ascertain the role the outside actors or area experts played in decision-making.

All these sources *together* helped provide a rich source of materials and assisted the author to piece together what transpired during the decision-making for the four decisions. It also enabled the study to form an understanding of individual policymakers, their bureaucratic muscle, their particularities, namely, belief systems and images, and the impact of domestic influences upon them during the making of each of the four decisions. Analysing the three variables, especially the latter two, indirectly brought the *context* (or the *milieu*) to life in which they operate, which in turn allowed the author to provide rich-in-detail analysis for the four foreign policy decisions regarding Afghanistan.

## PART TWO: A CRITIQUE

### INTRODUCTION

This part is divided into three sections. The first section stages the debate over the influence or otherwise of public opinion (PO) on decision-making in the White House. The second section deals with the limitations of the Foreign Policy Decision-Making (FPDM) as well as the Bureaucratic Politics (BP) Approaches. The third section provides clarification as to how the BP Approach has been utilised in the present study.

#### 2.2.1. THE ROLE OF PUBLIC OPINION IN DECISION-MAKING

The issue of PO and its influence in foreign policy (FP) has been a matter of dispute between scholars of different schools of thought. The theoretical and empirical disagreement centres upon the nature and the influence of PO.

Theoretically, the realism, or 'the elite-centric model', claims that PO is emotional (or 'moodish'), irrational, ill-informed, easily shiftable (or volatile), lacks structure and coherence, and can be manipulated by leaders from the top.<sup>85</sup> As far as Gabriel A. Almond is concerned, 'public opinion is apathetic when it should be concerned, and panicky when it should be calm'.<sup>86</sup> For the classical realist Hans Morgenthau, neorealist John J. Mearsheimer, and diplomat-historian George F. Kennan, policymakers make FP on the basis of 'national interest' and *ignore* the ('emotional' and 'subjective') views of the mass.<sup>87</sup> Policymakers do so because they are responsible officials who usually know what is 'wise', 'necessary' and more 'expedient' for the country.<sup>88</sup> Policymakers opt for the rational choice, a choice which most likely will achieve the best outcome. Their choices are influenced by

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<sup>85</sup> T. Knecht, and M. S. Weatherford, 'Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: The Stages of Presidential Decision Making'. *International Studies Quarterly*, 2006, 50 (3): 705-727, <[http://home.comcast.net/~lionel Ingram/592\\_Knecht\\_PublicOpinion\\_4092800.pdf](http://home.comcast.net/~lionel Ingram/592_Knecht_PublicOpinion_4092800.pdf)>; Lippmann, Walter. 1995. *Essays in public philosophy*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, PP. 3-27; McCormick, James M. 2014. *American foreign policy and process*. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, p. 533; Jentleson, Bruce W. 2014. *American foreign policy: the dynamics of choice in the 21st century*. New York: Norton., pp. 76-85, pp. 76-78; Smith, Steve, Amelia Hadfield, and Timothy Dunne. 2008. *Foreign policy: theories, actors, cases*. Oxford[England]: Oxford University Press, pp. 137-153, especially pp. 137-141; Cox, Michael, and Doug Stokes. 2008. *US foreign policy*. Oxford: Oxford University, pp. 163-181, pp. 166-167.

<sup>86</sup> Almond is quoted in Sobel, Richard. 2001. *The impact of public opinion on U.S. foreign policy since Vietnam: constraining the colossus*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. viii.

<sup>87</sup> Knecht and Weatherford, op. cit.; Jentleson and Bruce, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>88</sup> Lippmann, op. cit., p. 20.

external forces (survival and maximisation of power in an uncertain international system) rather than internal forces, such as PO. The public can approve or disapprove of a government, but they cannot administer it; 'A mass cannot govern'.<sup>89</sup> For the realists, the government always leads; it does not follow.<sup>90</sup>

The leaders can also *lead* the public to hold certain views. Leaders take steps to convince the public to support their decisions that they have *already* made. They can do so by 'framing' an issue in a particular way and engaging in 'crafted talk'. They can do so since the American public has less knowledge about foreign affairs than about domestic policies.<sup>91</sup> The mass media are said to be hardly challenging the executive leadership and instead faithfully support the policy. Thus, if there was any correlation between PO and FP, PO 'follows the leadership of the executive branch, as presidents have significant control over the dissemination of information and hence considerable latitude in policy selection'.<sup>92</sup> In sum, the realist theories argue that policymakers either 'lead' the public to support their policies or 'ignore' public preferences altogether. Accordingly, there is little direct link between what the public thinks and what leaders do.

The pluralist model, notably the liberal theories, finds PO to be relatively stable, sensibly structured, consistent, and consequently impactful on FP, as presidents (in the White House) take into consideration PO when making foreign policy decisions.<sup>93</sup> Liberal theories, such as the democratic peace theory, claim that presidents take into consideration public preferences for a number of assumptions, which can be summarised as follows: public support is important because it legitimises the government within democracies.

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>90</sup> T. Knecht, Thomas. 2010. *Paying attention to foreign affairs: how public opinion affects presidential decision making*. University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, <<http://www.psupress.org/books/titles/978-0-271-03753-0.html>>; Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., p. 138.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Knecht and Weatherford, op. cit., state a number of studies which support the quote; Smith, Hadfield, and Dunne, op. cit., p. 138. Smith, Hadfield and Dunne give the British and American governments as an example to argue that both governments devoted significant time and resources to convince their electorates that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction and this constituted a threat: Smith, Hadfield, and Dunne, op. cit., p. 141.

<sup>93</sup> Shamir, Yaacov, 'Introduction: What is Public Opinion and Why is it Important to Conflict Resolution?', *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture*, Vol. 11, Nos 3&4, 2004-2005, <<http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=304>>; McCormick, op. cit., p. 533; Holsti, Ole R. 1996. *Public opinion and American foreign policy*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. <<http://site.ebrary.com/id/10315953>>, pp. 26-37, 39-46, 159-162, 209-216; Kull, Steven, and Stewart M. Patrick, 'Does Public Opinion Matters? World Attitudes on Global Governance', *The Council on Foreign Relations*, December 4, 2009, <<http://www.cfr.org/global-governance/does-public-opinion-matter-world-attitudes-global-governance/p34673>>

Success in an election is usually essential to secure legitimacy, but it is not always sufficient.<sup>94</sup> ‘Were the public to have no say in policymaking, with all power centralised with the governments’ implementers, then policymaking would be subjected to an “elected dictatorship”’;<sup>95</sup> rational politicians set aside their own beliefs and dutifully follow public preferences because they are *responsible* for the public’s will;<sup>96</sup> presidents want to maintain or even increase their approval rating. Unpopular FP decisions can reduce a president’s chance of support for re-election, or for more important domestic policies, or even for the implementation of (unpopular) policies, and thus presidents are careful not to take risky decisions;<sup>97</sup> due to the fact that citizens bear the burden of war in ‘blood, sweat, tears, and tax dollars’, they would object to becoming involved in foreign wars.<sup>98</sup> In sum, as political elites are ultimately accountable to the public, rational politicians attempt to gain an advantage at the polls by enacting policies favoured by the public. They avoid policies that alienate or offend the electorates.

Empirically, each of the above claims is backed by a wealth of evidence.

Early influential studies of diplomatic historian Thomas A. Bailey’s *The Man in the Street: The Impact of American Public Opinion on Foreign Policy* (1948), political scientist Gabriel Almond’s *The American People and Foreign Policy* (1950), diplomat-historian George F. Kennan’s *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950* (1951), and journalist Walter Lippmann’s *Essays in the Public Philosophy* (1955), were of the opinion that the American people were poorly informed of world affairs and their opinions lacked coherence and structure (and being volatile and irrational) and hence they rarely influenced policymakers.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Shamir, op. cit.

<sup>95</sup> Flint, James, ‘Foreign policy, the State, International Public Opinion and the Media’, *E-International Relations Students*, February 12, 2015, <<http://www.e-ir.info/2015/02/12/foreign-policy-the-state-international-public-opinion-and-the-media/>>

<sup>96</sup> Knecht( 2010), op. cit. Knecht’s ‘political responsive’ causal pathway continues to argue that presidents might desire to lead PO, but they often find their ability to do so surprisingly limited; Smith, Hadfield, and Dunne, op. cit., p. 139; Kegley, Charles W, and Eugene R. Wittkopf. 2012. *American foreign policy: pattern and process*. New York: St Martin’s press, p. 265.

<sup>97</sup> Chan, Steve, William Safran, ‘Public Opinion as a Constraint Against War: Democracies Response to Operation Iraqi Freedom’, March 8, 2006; Shamir, op. cit.; Knecht (2010), op. cit.; Kegley and Wittkopf, op. cit., p. 291.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.; Cox and Stokes, op. cit., p. 167.

<sup>99</sup> These pioneering studies are quoted in almost every academic piece on the correlation between PO and FP. Some of the sources include: Sobel, op. cit., pp. vii-viii; Holsti (1996), op. cit., pp. 1-21, 23-37, especially pp. 10-12, 19, 24, 29-31; Hadfield, and Dunne, op. cit., p. 139; Knecht( 2010), op. cit.; Knecht and Weatherford, op. cit. Knecht and Weatherford, additionally, cite a handful of recent studies which support the views of the early consensus.



In contrast, more and more studies in the past 40 years have found that early studies had not established their case to claim that public attitudes had a potent role as far as decision-making was concerned. One pioneering research was conducted by John E. Mueller, who – using the Vietnam and Korean Wars as a case study – convincingly demonstrated that PO mattered during wars that become protracted and expensive in terms of US blood and tax dollars.<sup>100</sup> Another prominent study was undertaken by Ole R. Holsti. Writing about the role of PO in the US, his research showed that World War I changed the role of public participation from a theoretical one into a practical one.<sup>101</sup> World War II and its aftermath further strengthened the role of PO. The Vietnam War then stimulated a number of studies that challenged many aspects of the earlier views on PO (explained below).<sup>102</sup> For Holsti, the end of the Cold War, especially the ending of bipartisan foreign policy consensus, facilitated the rise of partisan divides in the US,<sup>103</sup> and consequently raised new questions regarding the role of PO in FP decision-making.<sup>104</sup> One important question that many ask today is whether it is still appropriate to claim that the public is poorly informed, as in today's world, with advanced information technology, the mass is unquestionably better informed on matters concerning both domestic and foreign affairs.<sup>105</sup> Holsti's research dealt with the same question by addressing the two important issues which were subject to disagreement: the public could not make informed judgments on FP because their knowledge of foreign affairs was limited, and PO had no role in decision-making. Holsti used extensive data on public attitude and preferences on foreign events and concluded that, even though the American public was not well-informed on all details of foreign affairs, its opinion was generally stable and reasonable in reaction to real world events, was not lacking in structure, and, in many cases, had a crucial influence on FP decisions.<sup>106</sup>

Studies after Holsti (and some before, such as Mueller's) found that the American public both cared for foreign affairs and held opinions that were 'rational', 'prudent' and 'stable'. Sobel's research is one of the relatively recent studies. In his crucial work, Sobel

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<sup>100</sup> Mueller, John E. 1973. *War, presidents, and public opinion*. New York: Wiley, pp. 35-39, 65, 239-241, 266.

<sup>101</sup> Holsti (1996), op. cit., pp. 15-19.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., pp. 39-40.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., pp. 159-162.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., pp. 209-216.

<sup>105</sup> Hadfield, and Dunne, op. cit., pp. 141, 151; Cox and Stokes, op. cit., pp. 179-181.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., pp. 26-37, 40-62.

made a strong case for the power of the people. By focusing on four cases of prominent US interventions in the second half of the 20th century – the Vietnam War, the US support for the Contras in Nicaragua, the Gulf War, and the Bosnian crisis – he concluded that in each case PO ‘constrained’, but did not set, American foreign intervention policy.<sup>107</sup> He added that ‘[s]upport facilitates, while opposition limits’,<sup>108</sup> that is, PO ‘set the parameters within which policymakers operated’.<sup>109</sup> For example, due to the ‘no more Vietnams’ syndrome, the Reagan Administration would not intervene in Nicaragua but only assist the Contra rebels.<sup>110</sup> A great communicator like President Ronald Reagan found it difficult to persuade the American public to support overt interventionist policies in Nicaragua. The Bush Senior Administration would deploy a large force (accepting Powell Doctrines) to the Gulf War in order to help the public feel secure, and thus gaining and maintaining American support.<sup>111</sup> The Clinton Administration refused to send ground forces to fight in Bosnia and was reluctant to intervene for the first three years for fear that the public would react negatively if the US became bogged down in an endless mission. When public attitude approved the Allied action, the Clinton Administration eventually became involved in a multilateral mission.<sup>112</sup>

There are numerous other studies that support the ‘Holsti-Sobel’ views. They are cited by Holsti, Sobel and many others.<sup>113</sup> (Some even go further by implying that PO determines FP.)<sup>114</sup> Page and Shapiro’s research<sup>115</sup> found that PO remained remarkably stable (e.g. oppose isolationism and favour multilateralism) and was driven by specific events (a rational

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<sup>107</sup> Sobel, op. cit., pp. X, 5, 25.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. x.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., pp. 138-139.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., pp. 173-174.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5, 229-230. There are also prominent examples which demonstrate that governments can ignore PO, e.g. opposition of the UK public to the UK participation in the run-up to the Iraq War in 2003: Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., p. 141.

<sup>113</sup> Holsti (1996), op. cit., pp. 39- 78, 191-216; Sobel, op. cit., pp. viii, ix; Knecht and Weatherford, op. cit.

<sup>114</sup> Knecht and Weatherford, op. cit., name them as follows: Small, Melvin. 1988. *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press; Bartels, Larry M., ‘Constituency Opinion and Congressional Policy Making: Regan Defence Building’, *American Politics Science Review*, 1991, 85: 457-474; Hartley, Thomas, and Bruce Russett, ‘Public Opinion and the Common Defense: Who governs Military Spending in the United States?’ *American Political Science Review*, 1992, 86: 905-915; Page, Benjamin I., Robert Y. Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of trends in Americans’ Preferences*. Chicago; university of Chicago Press.

<sup>115</sup> Page and Shapiro, op. cit.

process rather than irrational moodiness) in the past 50 years.<sup>116</sup> Samuel L. Popkin<sup>117</sup> found that, even though American citizens were not very well informed about world affairs, they still managed to 'make reasonably coherent sense of international development'.<sup>118</sup>

There are, however, those who argue that the influence of PO on FP varies from case to case (even from president to president).<sup>119</sup> Presidents do not always lead or follow. Presidents could lead, follow or ignore PO, depending on the circumstances of the issue (and on the president in question). They instead have identified factors that increase or decrease a president's sensitivity to PO. So they employ 'A Conditional Theory of Political Responsiveness': that is, when a large percentage of Americans are attentive to the issue, or when a significant majority of Americans hold the same preference on the issue, presidents seemed to feel increased pressure and response to PO. But if the public is not focused or, even worse, divided on the issue, political responsiveness decreases accordingly. They also find that crises such as war usually produce a highly attentive public. During crisis, the public remains attentive to how policies are implemented, and are interested in results.<sup>120</sup>

The debate between the liberalists and the realists has continued to date. For obvious reasons, this thesis cannot, and does not, embroil itself in such a theoretical and never-ending dispute. In its defence for using PO as a causal factor, however, the thesis puts forward two justifications: firstly, the thesis not only studies PO as a source, but also considers the impact of Congress, the media and area experts. They are all covered as part of 'domestic influences'. There is an overwhelming consensus, even among the elite-centric model, that policymakers are sensitive to the views of interest groups, partisan activists, area experts, the media, and Congress: they jointly influence decision-making;<sup>121</sup> secondly, since this research is conducted in the light of the FPDM Approach from the subfield of

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<sup>116</sup> Sobel, op. cit., p. viii; Holsti (1996), op. cit., pp. 43-44; Jentleson and Bruce use data and figures to make the point, op. cit., pp. 78-79; Hadfield, and Dunne, op. cit., p.139.

<sup>117</sup> *The reasoning voter*. Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1991.

<sup>118</sup> Sobel, op. cit., p. viii.

<sup>119</sup> Hadfield, and Dunne, op. cit., p. 141. Marcus Hobley gives an example of two contrasting views by two leaders: Winston Churchill was of the view that there 'is no such thing as public opinion. There is only published opinion.' But Abraham Lincoln took the view that, 'Public opinion in this country is everything', Hobley, Marcus, 'Public Opinion Can Play a Positive Role in Policy Making', *The Guardian*, September 3, 2012.

<sup>120</sup> The 'Conditional Theory of Political Responsiveness' is mentioned in Knecht (2010), op. cit.; and, in Knecht and Weatherford, op. cit.

<sup>121</sup> McCormick, James M. 2005. *American foreign policy and process*. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, p. 533; Knecht (2010), op. cit.; Jentleson and Bruce, op. cit., pp. 56-85, especially, pp. 57- 75, 81-84; Neack, Laura, Jeanne A. K. Hey, and Patrick Jude Haney. 1995. *Foreign policy analysis: continuity and change in its second generation*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, pp. 117, 135-138.

Foreign Policy Analysis, the Approach assumes that PO (and the other abovementioned domestic influences) influences FP decision-making.<sup>122</sup>

### 2.2.2. LIMITATIONS OF THE FPDM AND THE BP APPROACHES

BP as a model or approach has been criticised for a number of reasons. The criticism can be summarised as follows. Firstly, in treating the President as one of the main chiefs, who was slightly more powerful than the other bureaucratic chiefs, the BP Approach has underestimated the power of the President.<sup>123</sup> The President dominates policy through his authority to select and control both officials and decision-making style. He has the power to sideline an entire bureaucracy. Thus the 'President's style—his level of attention and involvement—is the most critical factor in determining the decision-making structure'.<sup>124</sup> To make matters more complicated, if there is central authority from the top (the President), 'then how much of a difference do the mechanics [pulling, hauling, and bargaining] make?'<sup>125</sup> Robert J. Art is of the opinion that bringing in presidential perspectives (authorities) can make one dubious of the resultant aspects of the BP Approach.<sup>126</sup> Secondly, the BP Approach gives little influence to the role of low-level officials and structures; both can influence policymaking through the control of information and implementation, particularly those decisions in which presidential involvement and organisational involvement are low – that is, when the heads of democracies are less attentive –, low-level officials can play a crucial part.<sup>127</sup> Thirdly, Rosati implicitly criticises the BP Approach for giving little attention to the decision 'context', as context 'not only determines, in part, who will participate in a decision, and thus, whose images count, but

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<sup>122</sup> Snyder, C. Richard, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin. 1962. *Foreign policy decision-making*. The Free Press of Glencoe, pp. 85-6; Hadfield, and Dunne, op. cit., p.138; Hudson, Valerie M. 2007. *Foreign policy analysis: classic and contemporary theory*. Lanham: Rowman& Littlefield Pub, pp.15, 25-26, 127; Neack, Hey, Haney, op. cit., pp. 117-138.

<sup>123</sup> Art, Robert J., 'A Critique of Bureaucratic Politics', in Hays, Peter L., Brenda J., and Alan R. Van Tassel. 1997. *American defence policy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 33-42, pp. 33 and 40; Ripley, Brian, 'Cognition, Culture, and Bureaucratic Politics', in Neack, Laura, Jeanne A. K. Hey, and Patrick Jude Haney. 1995. *Foreign policy analysis: continuity and change in its second generation*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, pp. 85-96, p. 88.

<sup>124</sup> Rosati, Jerel A., 'Developing A systematic Decision-Making Framework: Bureaucratic Politics in Perspective', *World Politics*, 1981, <<http://people.cas.sc.edu/rosati/documents/rosati.decision-making%20framework.wp.1981.pdf>>

<sup>125</sup> Art, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>127</sup> Rosati, op. cit.; Durbin, Brent, 'Bureaucratic Politics Approach', *Britannica*, 2007, <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1904171/bureaucratic-politics-approach>>

also affects the selection and formulation of images'.<sup>128</sup> Rosati continues to claim that the views (belief system and images) of policymakers have a direct impact on the resultants, since they influence the way the decision-making process is set out. He proposes that both context and belief system should be made integral parts of the BP Approach.<sup>129</sup> Robert J. Art makes a similar proposition with regard to the role of domestic influences.<sup>130</sup>

Fourthly, the BP Approach is also criticised for ignoring the impact of other nations' actions on the US in order to explain US reactions. Robert J. Art argued that 'we need the systematic perspective in order to avoid the opposite dangers that an uncritical acceptance of the paradigm would bring—looking for things that are not there and seeing things that we should overlook'.<sup>131</sup> Fifthly, the BP Approach overlooks the role the legislation branch and other external institutions can play in decision-making. Graham Allison failed to take into account the role of Congress and numerous other actors in the original (1971) bureaucratic politics case study of the Cuban missile crisis. Instead, as was widely argued, the Approach's main focus was on the premise of 'where you stand depends on where you sit'. The criticism assumed that the BP Approach treated the premise as 'Miles' law' (must do). The premise was criticised for its 'narrow view of preference formation',<sup>132</sup> as it implied that the players followed those policies that benefited the bureaucracies they represented rather than *collective* interests. Finally, since the BP Approach has most often applied to studies of crisis decision-making, its usefulness for explaining ordinary decision-making is argued to be questionable.<sup>133</sup>

It is important to mention that a great deal of the above criticism was voiced soon after Allison wrote *Essence of Decision* in 1971. In the revision of the book in 1999, Allison and his co-author, Philip Zelikow, tried to address much of the above criticism by clarifying their approach(s) and, in certain cases, modifying it. 'Where you stand depends on where you sit' is not the only component of the BP Approach, argued Allison and Zelikow, as it has other

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<sup>128</sup> Rosati, op. cit.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Art, op. cit., pp. 36 and 40.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>132</sup> Carlsnaes, Walter, 'The Agency-Structure Problem in Foreign Policy Analysis', *International Studies Quarterly*, September 1992, <<http://www.ir.rochelleterman.com/sites/default/files/Carlsnaes%201992.pdf>>; Durbin, op. cit.; Allison and Zelikow also acknowledge the criticism, in Allison, Graham T., and Philip Zelikow. 1999. *Essence of decision: explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. New York: Longman; Art, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

<sup>133</sup> Durbin, op. cit.

components as well.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, the word ‘depends’ did not mean ‘is always determined by’.<sup>135</sup> The premise was more of relevance if one analysed ‘budgets and procurement decision’.<sup>136</sup> Their clarification implied that the premise could be ignored if it did not seem relevant.<sup>137</sup> They made it clear that the views of the players, the options and how options were developed were also important components.<sup>138</sup> Moreover, factors such as context (milieu or circumstances), personal beliefs, domestic influences, and the role of external actors including Congress (and, in certain cases, the contribution made by low-level bureaucrats) were other sources of analysis.<sup>139</sup> They also made clear that the President was a very important player, and his or her thoughts and personal characteristics were crucial in explaining a FP choice.<sup>140</sup> While the President was considered the main player, he nevertheless was informed, influenced, misled and even ignored by officials around him.<sup>141</sup>

The FPDM Approach from the subfield of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) has also been subjected to much criticism. As seen in the theoretical part above, the causal factors in the FPDM Approach (and FPA) are ‘multifactorial’, multilevelled, and ‘multidisciplinary’, and the critiques of the FPDM Approach argued that it was impossible to trace all influences (and to measure their impact) on a given foreign policy choice, or even on decision-making in the abstract. Herbert McClosky’s quotation demonstrates the point very well: the ‘inordinate complexity’ of the FPDM Approach from FPA ‘as it has so far been outlined is unquestionably its greatest shortcoming, one which in the end may prove its undoing.... A research design that requires an investigator to collect detailed information about such diverse matters as the social system, the economy, the foreign situation, the actors, the perceptions, the motivations, the values, the goals, the communication problems, the personality—in short, that asks him to account for a decision-making event virtually *in its totality*—places a back-breaking burden upon him, one that he could never adequately accomplish even if he were willing to invest an exorbitant effort. If the mere magnitude of

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<sup>134</sup> Allison and Zelikow, op. cit., pp. 307, 386-387.

<sup>135</sup> Allison and Zelikow, op. cit., p. 307, 386-387.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., p. 307.

<sup>137</sup> Allison and Zelikow, op. cit., p. 307.

<sup>138</sup> Allison and Zelikow, op. cit., p. 386.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., pp. vii-xiii, 296, 297-298, 328, 386. The next section explains in detail how these sources were utilised by Allison and Zelikow.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., pp. 340, 383.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p. 383.

the task does not frighten him off, he is likely to be discouraged by the unrewarding prospect of having to collect data about a great number of variables whose relative importance he can only guess at and whose influence he cannot easily measure in any event.’<sup>142</sup> Analysing ‘such diverse matters’ also strikes analysts as an undue concern with ‘ephemeral eddies in a larger current’, adding that not just the information costs of tracking the ‘eddies’ are too high, but also the ‘danger of distraction from the real picture is too great’.<sup>143</sup>

Such criticism (equally levelled against the BP approach)<sup>144</sup> was used as a justification to use the nation state or other ‘abstractions’ as the principal actor (or level of analysis) in the field of International Relations (IR).

Indeed, much of the critique has come from the discipline of IR. The split between the FPDM Approach and IR is on the unit of analysis: generally speaking, the FPDM Approach (and FPA) adopt an actor perspective, that is, the focus is on individual policymakers, whereas IR theories see state-as-person-or-actor.<sup>145</sup> Since it has an ‘actor-based perspective’, focusing largely on ‘individual motivation and cognition’ (a subjective perspective) at the expense of systematic factors (e.g. the nature and operation of the international system) and unique state-level factors, the discipline of IR has criticised the FPDM Approach.<sup>146</sup> The FPDM Approach forgets, argue IR theorists, that FP is not only about the inner experience of the state elites, but also about wider (national and, most importantly, international) structural sources.<sup>147</sup> By an ‘allegedly excessive concern with the domestic processes of foreign policymaking and the inner workings of the state,’<sup>148</sup> and by leaving out systematic factors, the FPDM Approach has limited itself as an approach. Unlike in the FPDM Approach, in IR, individual actors are treated as ‘rational’; they and their personal characteristics are treated as irrelevant to the analysis of foreign policy, and are consequently black-boxed. The quote by Robert J. Art above is equally applicable to the

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<sup>142</sup> Hudson (2007), op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>143</sup> They are anonymously referred to by Allison and Zelikow, op. cit., p. 387.

<sup>144</sup> Ripley, op. cit., p. 88; Allison and Zelikow, op. cit., p. 387.

<sup>145</sup> Beneš, Vít, ‘Role theory: A conceptual framework for the constructivist foreign policy analysis’, *Institute of International Relations*, 2011, <[http://wiscnetwork.org/porto2011/papers/WISC\\_2011-768.pdf](http://wiscnetwork.org/porto2011/papers/WISC_2011-768.pdf)>

<sup>146</sup> Mintz, Alex, and Karl R. DeRouen. 2010. *Understanding foreign policy decision making*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 10.

<sup>147</sup> Beneš, op. cit.

<sup>148</sup> White, Brian, ‘The European Challenge to Foreign Policy Analysis’, *European Journal of International Relation*, pp. 37-66, p. 38, <<http://m.ejt.sagepub.com/content/5/1/37.full.pdf>>

FPDM Approach. Art claims that ‘we need the systematic perspective in order to avoid the opposite dangers that an uncritical acceptance of the paradigm would bring—looking for things that are not there and seeing things that we should overlook’.<sup>149</sup>

The most widely accepted theory from IR is realism. It has been realism from which much of the critique against the FPDM Approach has emanated. It is important to cover it in some detail in order to better understand the different outlooks the two fields have. Realism is a school of thought based, generally speaking, on three assumptions: *groupism*, that is, human beings face each other as members of groups, the most important of them being nation states, and this very cohesion of groups generates potential for conflict because there is anarchy. By this the realist means that the system of states does not have a higher authority to enforce compliance among states; *egoism*, that is, self-interest drives politics and always trumps collective interests; and *power-centrism*, that is, states (the rational and unitary actors) always try to maximise their power, seen as the currency of international politics. Hans Morgenthau, who popularised classical realism, argued that actors are rational and it is assumed that policymakers think and act in terms of national interest defined in terms of power.<sup>150</sup> The concept of power enables the analyst to understand the action of the policymakers regardless of their intentions or views.<sup>151</sup> There is no regard for the moral sentiments and hopes which nations profess or which observers may have in their hearts. ‘It is squarely in the scientific tradition.’<sup>152</sup> Universal moral principles cannot be applied to ‘actions of states in their abstract universal formation’.<sup>153</sup> Morgenthau adds that while ‘an individual may have a duty to act in the defence of moral principles, the same cannot apply to the state, since the state’s action to be judged by a different criterion: that of national survival’.<sup>154</sup> For realism, ‘prudence’ is the utmost virtue in politics, and national survival is only secured by maximising one’s power.<sup>155</sup> Power is defined as social influence, control, material wealth, military capacity, resources or raw

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<sup>149</sup> Art, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>150</sup> Hollis, Martin, and Steve Smith. 1990. *Explaining and understanding international relations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 25.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 26. However, for neorealists, such as Kenneth Waltz, states’ preferences ‘are shaped primarily by power distributions within the system of states.’ (Hudson, op. cit., p.10) For Waltz, adds Hudson, it is the structures, defined objectively, that primarily shape the system of behaviour.



materials, and so forth.<sup>156</sup> Thus states are *motivated* by the concept of power, and the numerous schools in realism give a different account of state motivation.<sup>157</sup> But what is the motivation that states pursue in the FPDM Approach? Being *silent* on motivation has been seen as another major limitation of the FPDM Approach (and of FPA). One would not understand FP if one has no 'clear sense of what it is that states are motivated by, what their function is, how they work'.<sup>158</sup> It is claimed that the FPDM Approach provides a 'state-centric' account of the world, but fails to offer a clear theory of the state. In fact, the FPDM Approach has not developed a 'general theory of foreign policy'.<sup>159</sup> It was and has remained a 'sterile field which has been devoid of innovation'.<sup>160</sup> Most of 'the work being done takes the form of empirical case studies which shuffle and reshuffle a small number of ideas rather than create new theories'.<sup>161</sup>

For all of the above reasons, the FPDM Approach (and FPA) are said to not 'fit neatly within the existing theoretical paradigms'.<sup>162</sup> The IR theorists have tried to distance themselves from the FPDM Approach, as the latter's restricted focus on decision-making and its increasing distance to the diplomat's world would equally turn IR into a 'behaviourist science'.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Keukeleire, Stephan, and Simon Schunz, 'Foreign policy, globalization and global governance - The European Union's structural foreign policy', <<http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-riga/virtualpaperroom/102.pdf>>; Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>157</sup> There are many theoretical schools within realism, including classical realism, neorealism, offensive realism, defensive realism, balance of power theory, balance of threat theory, and hegemonic stability. For defensive realists, such as Kenneth Waltz, the US adopted the expansionist FP since 9/11 because it felt that other states attempted to 'balance' American power. The US's expansion of power is aimed for 'security maximizers'. However, offensive realists, such as John Mearsheimer, argue that states always look for opportunities to 'expand' their powers; states are 'power maximizers'. It is claimed that the US is uncertain about the current and future intentions of certain countries, including China and Russia, and hence it has the policy to increase its power. According to offensive realists, the best way for a state to survive is to ensure it is the 'most powerful state in the system'. Classical realists, such as Hans Morgenthau, take into consideration both status quo as well as imperialistic powers in their theory (Cox and Stokes, op. cit., pp. 12-13).

<sup>158</sup> White, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>160</sup> Keukeleire and Schunz, op. cit.

<sup>161</sup> White, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Rynning, Sten, Stefano Guzzini, 'Realism and Foreign Policy Analysis', 2002, <[isciplinas.stoa.usp.br/pluginfile.php/115684/mod\\_resource/content/1/Leitura obrigat%C3%B3ria Sten%20Rynning e Guzzini%20Stefano.Realism and Foreign Policy Analysis. Mimeografado%202002pdf](http://isciplinas.stoa.usp.br/pluginfile.php/115684/mod_resource/content/1/Leitura%20obrigat%C3%B3ria%20Sten%20Rynning%20e%20Stefano%20Guzzini%20Realism%20and%20Foreign%20Policy%20Analysis%20Mimeografado%202002.pdf)> Hudson provides numerous reasons in an attempt to falsify the claim that FPA and IR theory are 'incommensurable', Hudson, op. cit., pp. 6-14.

Hudson, however, provides numerous reasons in an attempt to falsify the claim that the FPDM Approach and IR theory are 'incommensurable'.<sup>164</sup> She and numerous other scholars in turn highlight numerous shortcomings in IR theories, including realism,<sup>165</sup> adding that the field of IR failed to predict the end of the Cold War, which took place due to the efforts/choices made by individual policymakers, most notably US President Ronald Reagan and the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.<sup>166</sup> IR is not adequate, Hudson and Christopher S. Vore claim, to understand the world of today where the Cold War bipolar system ceased to exist. What is needed is a theory of human choice. FPA provides such a theory, in which the focus is on how and why policy is made, and assumes that human beings are the source of much behaviour and most change in international politics. It was time to take the FPDM Approach to the study of IR since '[o]ur inherited tools [from IR] and ways of describing the international arena seem not to work as well as they once did. It is time to reevaluate the theories and concepts that compromise the IR tool kit, saving those that have proven useful, changing or discarding those that have not, and addressing the gaps that have arisen'.<sup>167</sup> Hudson and Vore believe that the FPDM Approach fills that gap. Indeed, their proposition was to throw nation states and other abstractions out of the IR tool kit, and instead put in human decision-makers.<sup>168</sup>

To conclude, the *theoretical* debate between scholars of IR and FPA has been going on for decades. 'Though no final resolution will ever be accepted, as this is a perennial philosophical conundrum',<sup>169</sup> what is accepted is that the FPDM Approach from the subfield of FPA has been widely recognised and used as an approach to understand and explain foreign policy decisions.<sup>170</sup> The same is the case in relation to the BP Approach.<sup>171</sup> If one avoided an approach or a theory because it has been subject to criticism, then there would be *no* approach or theory left to employ, as every single theory or approach, in one way or another, has been criticised.

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<sup>164</sup> Hudson, op. cit., pp. 6-14.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., pp. 10-17; Allison and Zelikow, op. cit., p. 404; Smith, Hadfield, and Dunne, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-14.

<sup>167</sup> Hudson, Valerie M., Christopher S. Vore, 'Foreign Policy Analysis Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow', *Mershon International Studies Review*, October 1995, <<http://bev.berkeley.edu/fp/readings/ForeignPolicyAnalysisDomesticPolitics.pdf>>

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.; Hudson, op. cit., pp. 4-5, 8.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>170</sup> Hudson, op. cit., pp. 13-14; Hudson and Vore, op. cit.; Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., pp. 1-3; Neack, Hey, Haney, op. cit., pp. 1-15; Kegley and Wittkopf, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

<sup>171</sup> Ripley, op. cit., p. 88.

### 2.2.3. HOW IS THE BP APPROACH UTILISED TO INFORM THE PRESENT THESIS?

This section provides a detailed explanation as to how the impact of bureaucratic politics has been used as a causal factor in the present thesis. In order to do so, this section first states how Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow employed the Approach. Then the section spells out how the dependent and independent variables from the BP Approach have been utilised to inform the present study. It adds, however, that most of these variables were covered under the umbrella of the FPDM Approach. The concluding remarks provide clarification as to how Allison and Zelikow's Bureaucratic Politics Approach has been drawn on as a causal factor upon the four decisions towards Afghanistan.

Allison and Zelikow dedicate two chapters to the BP Approach. In chapter five they introduce BP as an Approach,<sup>172</sup> and, in the subsequent chapter,<sup>173</sup> they apply the Approach to inform their study of the Cuban missile crisis. In chapter five, they explain that the basic unit of analysis, or the explanandum, is '*Governmental Action as Political Resultant*'.<sup>174</sup> It is *resultant* because it is not chosen as a solution to the problem 'but rather results from compromise, conflict, and confusion of officials with diverse interests and unequal influence'.<sup>175</sup> It is *political* since decisions emerge 'along regularised channels among individual members of the government'.<sup>176</sup> Political resultants, or decisions, emerge from the *interaction* between the policymakers. They refer to the policymakers as 'players', and to the interaction between the policymakers as the 'game'.<sup>177</sup> Although they have used different terminologies (e.g. 'players', 'game', 'political resultants', 'action', 'interaction', and so forth), it is abundantly clear – both from the description of the Approach in chapter five,<sup>178</sup> and from application of the Approach to the Cuban missile crisis in chapter six<sup>179</sup> – that the focus in the BP Approach is essentially on *the decision-making process*: on the individuals, their particularities, their (competing) views, how problems were defined, what options were put forward to solve the problems, how options were developed, and the

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<sup>172</sup>Allison and Zelikow, op. cit., pp. 255-313.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., pp. 325-366.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p. 294.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., pp. 294-295.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., p. 295.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p. 295.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., pp. 296-313, 382.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., pp. 333-337, 338-347.

pulling and hauling.<sup>180</sup> They all are important components of the decision-making process, which produce or yield political resultants. Likewise, the four decisions in my thesis (hereafter referred to as 'the thesis') are the products of a process and are therefore political resultants. The object of analysis in the thesis, therefore, is the same as the one identified by Allison and Zelikow in chapter five,<sup>181</sup> and subsequently analysed in chapter six.<sup>182</sup> It is the same *because* the BP Approach is an *extension* of the FPDM Approach (which the thesis employs as an Approach) established by Snyder and colleagues.<sup>183</sup> One issue that Allison and Zelikow emphasise, but Snyder and colleagues seemingly do not, is to discover which player(s) among the many players influenced the resultant, and how and why. In other words, the object of analysis for the BP Approach is: who said/did what, how and why, and *what factors enabled him or her to be more (or less) impactful*. The italicised or latter part of the unit of analysis demonstrates why and how a particular policymaker emerged less or more prominent from the game. As will be explained in the concluding remarks, the latter aspect is of much interest to the thesis.

As for the conceptual questions, Allison and Zelikow explain that the organising concepts of the BP Approach can be arranged in the answers to four interrelated questions: 'Who plays? What factors shape players' perceptions, preferences and stance on the issue? What determines each player's impact on the results? How does the game combine players' stands, influence, and moves to yield governmental decisions and actions?'<sup>184</sup>

For the first conceptual question, they introduce the players and their positions, and provide background information.<sup>185</sup> They introduce not only policymakers, but also those outside players whose actions have an important effect on the decision.<sup>186</sup> For the second conceptual question, they name a number of factors to be analysed. Personal characteristics, including operating styles, are an 'irreducible part of the mix [game or policymaking]'.<sup>187</sup> Domestic influences play a crucial part, since 'Presidents and their senior

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid., pp. 386-388.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., pp. 294-296.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., pp. 333-337, 338-346.

<sup>183</sup> Art, Robert J., 'A Critique of Bureaucratic Politics', in Hays, Peter L., Brenda J., and Alan R. Van Tassel. 1997. *American defence policy*. Baltimore: John's Hopkins University Press, p. 34; Rynning and Guzzini, op. cit.; Allison and Zelikow, op. cit., p. 382.

<sup>184</sup> Allison and Zelikow, op. cit., p. 296.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., pp. 326, 332-336.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., p. 296.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., p. 298.

appointees rarely fail to consider domestic political consequences of their choices'.<sup>188</sup> Context is another factor. When explanation is 'sought for a specific action, the question arises in context'.<sup>189</sup> Without referring to 'context', they continue, decisions or resultants cannot be explained.<sup>190</sup> They considered all of the above factors when they analysed the 'interaction' between players, which produced the 'blockade-ultimatum' resultant relating to the Cuban missile crisis.<sup>191</sup>

For the third conceptual question, they claim that it is power ('i.e. effective influence on government decisions and actions')<sup>192</sup> that determines a policymaker's impact on the decision, and power is made up of many elements: bargaining advantages; skills and will, especially the ability to persuade other players to choose one's proposed option; control over resources necessary to carry out action; control over information, including knowledge of or expertise in the FP area in question, e.g. Petraeus's expertise in counter-insurgency; and, most importantly, personal ties or relationships with other players, which enable the player to persuade others to choose his or her desired option.<sup>193</sup> For example, for Allison and Zelikow, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy was the obvious winner simply because he was brother to President John F. Kennedy and had easy access to the President.<sup>194</sup>

For the fourth conceptual question, they focus on the unit of analysis: the process, or the 'game'. They briefly explain the operating style President John F. Kennedy followed: how, when and in what form the National Security Council meetings took place.<sup>195</sup> They then continue to provide lengthy accounts of what advice each member of the Kennedy National Security team provided.<sup>196</sup> It is clear that policymakers had different views and competing judgments about what to be done. The missiles posed 'no single issue', but rather players perceived 'many faces of quite different issues' framed for them by their characters, responsibilities and experiences.<sup>197</sup> Each player tried to push/be pulled/hailed for their policy choice. Eventually, everyone agreed upon the blockade-ultimatum option. The political resultant of blockade-ultimatum emerged from the pulling and hauling – the

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid., p. 298.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., p. 392.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., p. 328.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., pp. 329-331, 335, 337, 339.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., p. 300.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., pp. 300, 333-336.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., p. 346.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., pp. 325-327.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., pp. 332-337, 338-346, 356-361.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., p. 346.

game – because the players did not know which option the President and the War Cabinet as a whole favoured from the start.<sup>198</sup> For the fourth conceptual decision, their focus was on the ‘game’ by which the blockade emerged as the American Government’s choice.<sup>199</sup> The BP Approach’s ‘explanatory power is achieved by displaying the game—the action-channel [a regularised means of taking governmental action on a specific kind of issue], the positions, the players, their preferences [including their personal characteristics], and the pulling and hauling—that yield, as a resultant, the action in question’.<sup>200</sup> They add: ‘Where an outcome was for the most part the triumph of an individual (e.g. the President) or group (e.g. the President’s team or a cabal) this model attempts to specify the details of the game that made the victory possible’.<sup>201</sup> In simple terms, both quotations could be interpreted to mean who said/did what, how and why, and what factors enabled him or her to be more (or less) impactful.

Similarly, in my thesis answers are provided to all of the four conceptual questions. For the first conceptual question, all the players are clearly identified and the necessary information, including background, is provided throughout the thesis; in particular, section two<sup>202</sup> of chapter four and section three<sup>203</sup> of chapter five identify/introduce the bureaucratic players, as well as those outside players who have participated in the decision-making process. For the second conceptual question, the thesis explains the factors that have shaped players’ perceptions, preferences and stances on each of the four decisions. Through the explanation of the belief system and images, one can discover what each policymaker’s perception was on the issue. It is explained that the policymakers took different stances on a specific issue because each believed that his or her stance would better serve the national security interest.<sup>204</sup> Moreover, it is stated that the chosen stance was taken because it was bureaucratically beneficial to the policymaker: his or her department would have been at the centre of decision-making had their policy opinion turned into policy (e.g. widening the Global War on Terror and broadening the definition of

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid., pp. 346-347.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., pp. 300-313, 325.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., pp. 304-305.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid. p. 305.

<sup>202</sup> The thesis, pp. 105-120.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., pp. 179-204.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., pp. 86-88, 100-105, 164-175, 250-254.

terrorism would put the Defense Department in a better position).<sup>205</sup> Their perceptions of the domestic political consequences of their choices were different: for example, when it came to public opinion, some were worried more than others.<sup>206</sup> In short, personal characteristics, domestic influences, and the milieu or context are analysed as those factors that shape players' perceptions, preferences and stances on the issue. Moreover, where it is clear, consideration is given to policy opinions made in order to increase the turf of a given bureaucracy, e.g. the widening of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) to include Iraq in the first phase of the war would have put the Pentagon at the centre of decision-making because it already had a contingency war plan.<sup>207</sup>

For the third conceptual question, personal ties (including the nature of the relationship between players, and previous animosity/friendship),<sup>208</sup> access to the President,<sup>209</sup> the compatibility of belief systems and images of bureaucratic players (especially with the two Presidents),<sup>210</sup> access to information (i.e. access to the front line in the case of Petraeus),<sup>211</sup> expertise in and knowledge of (or lack of both) US foreign policy,<sup>212</sup> the presence of previous preparations or war plans (in the case of the CIA for the intervention in Afghanistan),<sup>213</sup> accuracy/inaccuracy of policy assumptions—<sup>214</sup> these were all factors that determined the players' impact, or lack of it, on the four decisions. While references are made throughout the thesis, these sources are covered specifically by section two of chapter four and section three of chapter five.

For the fourth conceptual question, I provide information on how, when and in what form the National Security Council's meetings took place.<sup>215</sup> By focusing on the interaction (decision-making process), I explain in detail the competing policy opinions each policymaker voiced, stating how problems were defined, what options were put forward to solve the problems, how options were developed, and how the political resultant

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid., pp. 85, 192.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., pp. 87-88, 109, 167-168, 173-174.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., pp. 80-81, 192.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., pp. 106-107, 110-111, 112, 114-115, 180-181, 182-187, 192.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., pp. 107, 108, 110-111, 112, 114-115, 181, 182-187, 193, 195.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., pp. 119, 190, 198.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., p. 190.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., pp. 105, 106, 107, 108, 112, 114, 179, 182, 183, 184, 185-186, 190-191, 192, 196.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., pp. 80-81, 92, 94.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., pp. 128-151, 218-242.

<sup>215</sup> In the introductions for each of the four turning points.

emerged.<sup>216</sup> As Allison and Zelikow have done in their textbook,<sup>217</sup> I bring to attention how opinion was divided between two different courses of action.<sup>218</sup> As Allison and Zelikow have done,<sup>219</sup> I bring to light a political tug-of-war between powerful players, and conclude that each of the four resultants was the product of pulling and hauling, a bureaucratic war between Powell on one side, and the ‘influential triangle’ (Vice-President Richard Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and the neoconservatives) on the other, and between the David Petraeus group on the one side, and the Vice-President Joe Biden group on the other.<sup>220</sup> I explain why one group was more influential than the other, and why the other group’s or individual’s ability was compromised.<sup>221</sup> As Allison and Zelikow have claimed,<sup>222</sup> the thesis argues that individual decision-makers matter because if certain people had not been in positions of power, or if certain circumstances had been different, the resultants might have been different.<sup>223</sup> As Allison and Zelikow have done,<sup>224</sup> I explain that the way the issue was framed by the Defense Department in the Bush Administration, and by the David Petraeus group in the Obama Administration, compelled the two Presidents (Bush by choice, and Obama more or less by force) to agree with the choices made by the Defense Department and the David Petraeus group, respectively.<sup>225</sup> In addition, attention is paid, where relevant, to the premise of ‘where you stand depends on where you sit’. It is explained that the policymakers took certain views because their choices were beneficial to their bureaucracies.<sup>226</sup>

Thus I have provided answers to all four conceptual questions. I have explained who the policymakers were; what factors shaped their views; how they influenced/or did not influence the resultants; and how the decision-making process produced the four resultants. It should be reiterated, however, that the BP is *not* used as an Approach in the present thesis. Bureaucratic politics is rather analysed as a *source* or *causal factor*. It is analysed as one source among many others, all of which are considered *under* the umbrella of the FPDM

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<sup>216</sup> The thesis, pp. 79-91, 100-105, 204-208, 250-254.

<sup>217</sup> Allison and Graham, op. cit., p. 343.

<sup>218</sup> The thesis, pp. 86-87, 100-103, 164-178, 251-254.

<sup>219</sup> Allison and Zelikow, op. cit., pp. 338, 382.

<sup>220</sup> The Thesis, pp. 108-111, 188-190, 197-204, 254-255.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., pp. 105-120, 179-204.

<sup>222</sup> Allison and Zelikow, op. cit., pp. 383-385.

<sup>223</sup> The thesis, pp. 260-261, 262.

<sup>224</sup> Allison and Zelikow, op. cit., pp. 339-340.

<sup>225</sup> The Thesis, pp. 91, 105, 132-133, 202-205.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., pp. 85, 192.



Approach. Most of the conceptual questions are answered in accordance with the questions raised by the FPDM Approach (stated in subsection four of the present chapter, chapter two), especially through the conceptual question of ‘What internal and external factors influenced policymakers and their objectives and motivations?’ Under this question the role of domestic influences and the belief systems and images of policymakers were also analysed.

As explained above, the BP Approach is an extension of the FPDM Approach, and therefore the conceptual questions raised by both Approaches are more or less the same.<sup>227</sup> Generally speaking, in *any* decision-making approach, the analyst would have to identify who the policymakers are and provide a narrative of the decision-making process (who said what, how and why). To complete the analysis, the analyst would have to go further by analysing those factors that could be shown to have played a part in shaping the policy choice. Thus, the first, second and fourth conceptual questions raised by Allison and Zelikow are covered (arguably) by any approach that has a decision-making outlook. Debatably, the most obvious innovation in the BP Approach, however, is the treatment of decision-making as a game. Since it is a game, it has a winner(s). The Approach tries to ascertain who the winner is and what factors enabled him or her to be the winner. In other words, the Approach tries to claim that the ultimate choice (policy) was the product of a game, and a particular player(s) played a crucial part in shaping the ultimate product (the resultant). This innovation is mainly introduced by the third conceptual question,<sup>228</sup> which the present study found relevant to the analysis of US Afghan policy (as the other three conceptual questions could be answered by the application of the FPDM Approach). The third conceptual question requires the analyst to identify which bureaucratic player(s) influenced the decision, and what factors helped him or her to do so. In the (present) thesis, the question has been rephrased as the following: ‘to what extent did the particular bureaucratic locations of policymakers play a part in the resulting policy?’ The ‘bureaucratic locations’ part of the conceptual question allows the thesis to recognise those bureaucratic players who impacted the final four products and highlight the factors that helped him or her to do so. So the influence of a particular policymaker(s) upon the four decisions, and the factors

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<sup>227</sup>For example, Graham and Zelikow imply some further conceptual questions for the BP Approach, which are similar to those raised by the FPDM Approach, Allison and Zelikow, *op. cit.*, pp. 386-387.

<sup>228</sup> And by the unit of analysis, which has already been discussed above.

that enable him or her to be influential, is the causal factor (derived from the BP Approach) that the present thesis analyses. As explained in relation to the third conceptual question above, a detailed explanation is provided *throughout* the thesis, especially in section two of chapter four and section three of chapter five, to identify those policymakers who were the driving force in both the Bush and Obama Administrations, and to pinpoint those factors that have made them be so.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> The thesis, pp. 80-83, 85, 92-97, 104, 105-120, 132-133, 155-156, 159-160, 179-204, 209-213, 238-239, 253, 254-255, 258, 260-261.

## PART THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

### INTRODUCTION

The literature covering US Afghan policy is divided into four phases, and each phase will be covered below. In addition to the four phases, there is another area of literature that disagrees on the US motive for its intervention in Afghanistan. Malalai Joya and Derrick O'Keefe claimed that the US intervened in Afghanistan to create a military balance in the region against Russia, China and India's rising military and economic capabilities and powers, and especially to curb China and Russia's influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Furthermore, the intervention enabled the US to be in a close proximity with Iran so that it could keep a close watch on the latter.<sup>230</sup> Melvyn Leffler likewise claimed that US involvement in 2001 was a quest for primacy and military supremacy as always, so there was no major shift in its foreign policy.<sup>231</sup> There are those who claim that the US invaded Afghanistan in order to destabilise the region, especially Pakistan, and have access to Pakistan's nuclear weapons.<sup>232</sup> There are yet those who claim that US intervention was mainly for obtaining better access to the oil and natural gas resources of Central Asia, and for exploiting Afghanistan's untapped natural resources.<sup>233</sup> Peter Scott, however, wrote that

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<sup>230</sup>Joya, Malalai, and Derrick O'Keefe. 2009. *A woman among warlords: the extraordinary story of an afghan who dared to raise her voice*. New York; scribner, p. 238.

<sup>231</sup> Leffler, Melvyn P., 'September 11 in Retrospect; George W. Bush's Grand Strategy, Reconsidered', *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68201/melvyn-p-leffler/september-11-in-retrospect>>; Steven Hurst focuses his book entirely on US involvement in Iraq. He concludes that the US intervened in Iraq in order to maintain its hegemonic position in the Persian Gulf by ensuring that the reliable flow of oil to the US and other 'core'(developed) states continued. The reliable flow of oil to the allies was intended to secure the consent of the allies' (or the 'core' states in the 'World Capitalist System') to US hegemony in the international oil system. The coming into power of the 'Right' wing (the Bush Junior Administration) of the Republican in 2000 was another causal factor as its approaches (militarism and unilateralism) drew the US into Iraq, in Hurst, Steven. 2009. *The United States and Iraq since 1979 hegemony, oil and war*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10391778>, pp. 1-20, 153-181.

<sup>232</sup>These Pakistani views are mentioned in Clinton, Hillary Rodham. 2014. *Hard choices*. New York, N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, p. 178; and, Gates, Robert Michael. 2014. *Duty: memoirs of a Secretary at war*, p. 477.

<sup>233</sup> Kleveman, Lutz. 2003. *The new great game: blood and oil in the Central Asia*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press; Koberle, Stefan. 2003. *The new great game: blood and oil in Central Asia*. London: Atlantic; Lieber, Robert J. 2005. *The American era: power and strategy for the 21st century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Rowell, Andy. 2001. "'Route to riches: Afghanistan" in energy policy', *The Guardian*, October 24, 2001; Ansari, Basherahmed. 2005. *Afghanistan in the flames of oils and gas*. Bangah Intesharat Maiwand, Kabul; Rustayi, Aubdelmanan. 2006. *The wars of the Super Powers and the Oil Projects in Afghanistan*; Joya and O'Keefe, op. cit., pp. 231-241.

the US intervened in Afghanistan to capitalise on Afghanistan's illicit drugs.<sup>234</sup> As this thesis mainly deals with decision-making, it therefore has no intention to consciously deal with US motives behind its intervention in Afghanistan. However, by providing a detailed account of decision-making and by analysing the different decisions, it becomes clear that the driving force behind the American foreign policy towards Afghanistan from its intervention in 2001 to its exit in 2011 has been nothing but self-defence or, to be accurate, *preventative* self-defence.

Incidentally, the literature review is not restricted to this chapter. Since the thesis deals with the four decisions, literature covering the four decisions, especially the contribution made by Congress and other domestic actors, such as the media and press, is scrutinised in each of the four chapters. Moreover, most of the works examined in this chapter are analysed in detail in their relevant chapters.

Since this thesis deals with the decision-making process, it is proper to utilise scholarship dealing with the dynamics in the Bush and Obama Administrations before considering the literature on the four phases. With two exceptions, literature covering the decision-making process in relation to Afghanistan is non-existent. The two exceptions are Bob Woodward's two books – *Bush at War*, 2002, and *Obama's Wars*, 2010. Additionally, literature concerning the dynamics of the two administrations in question and how they operated is very thin. One reason is the contemporary nature of the subject. Another reason seems to be the overwhelming focus on policy as an output, as opposed to policymaking process. However, almost every work written on US Afghan foreign policy or US foreign policy in general touches in one way or another upon foreign policy dynamics within the two administrations. It could be discerned from numerous works, directly or indirectly, that, after the 9/11 terrorist acts, Vice-President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the neoconservatives exerted influence on decision-making in the Bush Administration, especially in the first term. These 'trusted' advisors managed to do so because their outlooks were compatible with that of the President; a president who centralised decision-making in the White House – a process marked by secrecy and back-room dealing without the presence of close advisors and career diplomats. The-not-so-trusted Secretary of State Colin Powell, due to the inconsistency of his views and the

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<sup>234</sup> Scott, Peter Dale. 2010. *American war machine: deep politics, the CIA global drug connection, and the road to Afghanistan*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

awkward nature of his relationship with the President (unlike Rumsfeld and Cheney, who were close to Bush), was heard but not listened to. Aware of the influence of the Rumsfeld-Cheney-neoconservatives triangle, the ‘trusted’ National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice aligned her views with those from the triangle and went ahead with their policy suggestions, or at least did not contradict them. Numerous works, mostly those which give more attention to policymaking, could be cited for the above views, including James P. Pfiffner, James Mann, Bob Woodward, Robert Singh, David Mitchell, Stephen J. Wayne, Sean Wilentz, John Dumbrell, Ahmed Rashid, Michael C. Desch, Joseph S Nye, Philip H. Gordon, Joshua Micah Marshall, Ivo H Daalder, and I. M. Destler.<sup>235</sup>

As far as the inner dealings or policymaking within the Obama Administration are concerned, it is argued that Obama, like Bush, centralised decision-making. However, instead of secrecy, Obama followed a ‘multiple advocacy’ model whereby he heard all the opposing viewpoints from his secretaries and area experts before making a final decision. Unlike Bush, who mostly acted on his ‘instincts’, Obama’s approach to decision-making was highly analytical and intellectual. Unlike Bush, who hardly compromised once his mind was made up, Obama tended to reach for consensus by attempting to keep both opposing sides happy – a characteristic he was criticised for. However, like Bush, Obama was the ultimate decider, and like the triangle in the Bush Administration, certain individuals in the Obama

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<sup>235</sup>Pfiffner, James, ‘Decision Making in the Obama White House’, *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 2(June), 2011, pp. 244-262, <<http://www.marioguerrero.info/326/Pffiner2011.pdf>>; Pfiffner, James, ‘Policymaking in the Bush White House’, *The Brookings Institution*, October, 2008, <<http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2008/10/31-bush-pfiffner>>; Mann, Jim. 2004. *Rise of the Vulcans: the history of the Bush’s war cabinet*. New York: Viking; Woodward, Bob. 2002. *Bush at war*. New York: Simon & Schuster; Singh, Robert. 2012. *Barrack Obama’s post-American foreign policy: the limits of engagement*. London: Bloomsbury academic; Mitchell, David. 2005. *Making foreign policy: presidential management of the decision-making process*. Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate; Wayne, op. cit.; Wilentz, Sean. 2008. *The Age Of Reagan. A History 1974-2008*, New York: Harper Collins; Dumbrell, John, ‘The Neoconservative Roots of the War in Iraq’, in Pfiffner, James P., and Mark Phythian. 2008. *Intelligence and national security policymaking on Iraq; British and American perspectives*. Collage station: Texas A & M university Press; Rashid, Ahmed. 2009. *Descent into chaos: the world’s most unstable region and the threat to global security*. London: penguin; Desch, Michael C., ‘Bush and the Generals’, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June, 2007, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/62616/michael-c-desch/bush-and-the-generals>>; Nye, Jr, Joseph S., ‘Transformational Leadership and U.S. Grand Strategy’, *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2006, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/61740/joseph-s-nye-jr/transformational-leadership-and-us-grand-strategy>>; Gordon, Philip H., ‘Can the War on Terror Be Won? How to Fight the Right War’, *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2007, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63009/philip-h-gordon/can-the-war-on-terror-be-won>>; Marshall, Joshua Micah, ‘Remaking the World: Bush and the Neoconservatives’, *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2003, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/59380/joshua-micah-marshall/remaking-the-world-bush-and-the-neoconservatives>>; Daalder, Ivo H., and I. M. Destler, ‘In the Shadow of the Oval Office; The Next National Security Advisor’, *The Brookings Institution*, January/February, 2009, <<http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2008/12/01-national-security-adviser-daalder>>

Administration, who held various positions within the White House and the National Security Council – most notably, Rahm I. Emanuel, David M. Axelrod, Mark W. Lippert, Denis McDonough, and Ben J. Rhodes, as well as Vice-President Joseph R. Biden – were instrumental in assisting the President to reach a foreign policy decision. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and the military leaders such as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Michael Mullen and David Petraeus, and especially, National Security Advisor Jim Jones, were outside this influential group and consequently had little sway over the President. Due to the short time-frame, a large body of work has not been produced to cover the dynamics of policymaking within the Obama Administration. There are, however, some works that the above information could be derived from. They include works by Bob Woodward, James Mann, James P. Pfiffner, Stephen J. Wayne, Rajiv Chandrasekaran, Robert Singh, Michael C. Desch, Michael Hirsh, Fred Kaplan, Michael E. O’Hanlon, Martin Indyk, Kenneth Lieberthal, and Brett McGurk.<sup>236</sup>

## PHASE 1

During the intervention period in 2001, a number of commentators wrote that Afghans did not tolerate foreign invasions. They based their claims on the experiences of numerous invaders, such as Alexander the Great, the British Empire and the Soviet Union. They warned that the US could face the same fate. While most works were contributed by newspapers,<sup>237</sup> works by Milton Bearden and, to a certain extent, Peter Tomsen can be cited as

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<sup>236</sup> Woodward, Bob. 2010. *Obama’s wars*. New York; Simon & Schuster; Mann, Jim. 2012. *The Obamians: the struggle inside the White House to redefine American power*. New York: Viking; Pfiffner (2011), *op. cit.*; Wayne, *op. cit.*; Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. 2012. *Little America: the war for Afghanistan*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf; Singh, *op. cit.*; Desch, Michael C, ‘Obama and His General; Should McChrystal Solute and Obey?’ *Foreign Affairs*, October 27, 2009, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65662/michael-c-desch/obama-and-his-general>>; Kaplan, Fred, ‘The End of the Age of Petraeus; The Rise and Fall of Counterinsurgency’, *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2013, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138459/fred-kaplan/the-end-of-the-age-of-petraeus>>; O’Hanlon, Michael E. ‘State and Stateswoman: How Hillary Clinton Reshaped U.S. Foreign Policy — But Not the World’, *The Brookings Institution*, January 29, 2013, <<http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2013/01/29-hillary-clinton-state-ohanlon>>; Indyk, Martin, Kenneth Lieberthal, and Michael E. O’Hanlon. 2012. *Bending history: Barack Obama’s foreign policy*. Washington, D.C.: *The Brookings Institution Press*; McGurk, Brett, ‘Agreeing on Afghanistan: Why the Obama Administration Chose Consensus This Time’, *CNN*, June 22, 2011, <<http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/06/22/agreeing-on-afghanistan/>>

<sup>237</sup> Editorial, ‘The Quagmire Issue; U.S. Should Prepare for a Long Struggle’, *Dallas Morning News*, October 26, 2001; Dowd, Maureen ‘Liberties; Can Bush Bushkazi?’, *The New York Times*, October 28, 2011; Apple, R.W., ‘A Military Quagmire Remembered: Afghanistan as Vietnam’, *The New York Times*, October 31, 2001.

examples.<sup>238</sup> Seth Jones, however, strongly opposed comparing the US with the previous empires, especially the Soviet Union, because the Red Army terrorised the population rather than trying to *win* support of the Afghans.<sup>239</sup> Rashid and Tanner similarly asserted that conditions in the late-1970s were different in Afghanistan to conditions in 2001, and the Afghans, after decades of war, were willing for the first time to accept Western democracy, as the two years of calm period (2002-2004) was the evidence of it.<sup>240</sup>

## PHASE 2

As the situation kept deteriorating in Afghanistan post-2004, and the Bush Administration was embroiled in Iraq, a large body of work developed between 2004 and 2008, dealing with what went wrong in Afghanistan (and why), including works by Seth Jones, Tim Bird and Alex Marshall, Ahmed Rashid, Barnett Rubin, Stephen Tanner, David Lyon, Milton Bearden, William Malay, Richard Holbrooke, Kathy Gannon, Said T. Jawad, and Malalai Joya.<sup>241</sup> These works complement each other in their criticism of the Bush Administration's strategy in post-TB Afghanistan, and it was almost impossible to find a scholar who praised the Bush Administration Afghan policy.

Their criticisms could be summed up as follows: after decades of war, it was naive and irresponsible to assume Afghans could establish security by themselves. What post-conflict Afghanistan needed for security was not superior weaponry but more US troops, not just in Kabul but in other provinces. The Bush Administration's counterterrorism strategy, unfit for holding and building an area after being cleared, made the job of establishing law and order

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<sup>238</sup> Bearden, Milton, 'Obama's War: Redefining Victory in Afghanistan and Pakistan', *Foreign Affairs*, April 9, 2009, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64925/milton-bearden/obamas-war>>; Tomsen, Peter, 'Statement on Afghanistan: In Pursuit of Security and Democracy', *The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, October 16, 2003.

<sup>239</sup> Jones, Seth G. 2009. *In the graveyard of empires: America's war in Afghanistan*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co, pp. 131-132.

<sup>240</sup> Rashid, op. cit., p. 196; Tanner, Stephen. 2009. *Afghanistan: a military history from Alexander the great to the war against the Taliban*. Philadelphia: Da Capo, pp. 323-324.

<sup>241</sup> Jones, op. cit., pp. 12, 110-112, 115-119, 125-128, 195, 242-253; Bird, Tim and Alex Marshall. 2011. *Afghanistan: how the west lost its way*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 50, 74, 94, 104-106, 110, 114, 154, 177, 219; Rashid, op. cit., pp. XLI, 125-144, 171-239, 329; Tanner, op.cit., pp. 323-324, 333; Maley, William. 2006. *Rescuing Afghanistan*, Hurst and Company, London, p. 65; Gannon, Kathy, 'Afghanistan Unbound', *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2004, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/59891/kathy-gannon/afghanistan-unbound>>; Rubin, Barnett R., 'Saving Afghanistan', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2007, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/62270/barnett-r-rubin/saving-afghanistan>>; Joya and O'Keefe, op.cit., pp. 233-241, 243-247; Loyn, David. 2008. *Butcher and bolt*. London: Hutchinson, p. 293; Holbrooke, Richard, 'The Next President; Mastering a Daunting Agenda', *Foreign Affairs*, September/October, 2008, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63563/richard-holbrooke/the-next-president>>

impossible and eventually contributed to the collapse of the governance, especially in rural areas; refusal to provide adequate financial support to reconstruct Afghanistan created a distance between the Karzai Government and the population, which in turn made it easy for the Taliban (TB) to regroup in rural areas; since the Bush Administration did not provide sufficient troops on the ground, it utilised warlords as proxies against TB and al Qaeda (AQ), and, once the TB regime was toppled, they were used to keep peace on the street. Supported by large amounts of custom revenues, proceeds from illicit drugs, and CIA funding, these warlords, who had their own militias and were almost politically and fiscally autonomous, weakened the central Afghan Government by their contribution to insecurity, illicit drug trades, corruption, criminality, and the constraining of political options. Choosing this 'bad company' made the wall thicker among the ordinary Afghans and the Karzai Government and coalition forces; the administration's failure not to develop a coherent policy for forcible drugs eradication (an illicit trade with an income of several billion US dollars each year) is claimed to have made national and provincial politicians corrupt, paralysed the building of a legal economy, significantly weakened the rule of law, corrupted the police, strengthened the warlords, and funded TB to pay and arm its troops; the invasion of Iraq made the Afghanistan War take the back seat in money, policy attention, awareness, and military and non-military aids; the Bush Administration's decision to task out *its* responsibility to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is another cause of the deterioration of security in Afghanistan. The imposition of caveats (limitations on their mission: e.g. Germany refused to engage its forces in fighting against TB) by some NATO states and the poor results produced in security sector reforms are argued to have made it much more difficult for the US to protect the Afghan population, especially in the villages.

Had there been an effective Afghan national army or police, the TB would have not gained momentum in rural Afghanistan. Stephen Tanner, however, defended NATO's caveats, arguing that the US had told NATO states that they would only be involved in peacekeeping operations and reconstruction (not counterterrorism and counter-insurgency), and that was what their parliaments had given them the permission to do.<sup>242</sup>

These were the shortcomings which the biggest volume of literature developed by 2008 addressed. As stated, these works converge with each other on what went wrong in

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<sup>242</sup> Tanner, op. cit., p. 333.



Afghanistan. There were, however, some scholars who diverged on some aspects of the Bush Administration Afghan policy. An effective and strong government has not been historical in Afghanistan, many claimed, as local Pashtuns have historically resolved their conflicts through *jirgas* and *shuras* and never submitted to the central government. The Bush Administration (and, to a lesser extent, the Obama Administration) and NATO neglected to work closely with Pashtun tribes, subtribes, and clans in villages in Afghanistan, especially in the east and south to keep insurgents weak, and instead, through its 'lead nation' approach, focused on institutional building, trying to create an effective central authority.<sup>243</sup> Bird and Marshall added that it was politically and historically illiterate of the Bush Administration to assume that the lack of central government meant these rural areas were ungoverned and posed a threat, because the Code of Pashtunwali, which everyone abided by, meant they were one of the most governed societies in the world.<sup>244</sup> Said T. Jawad, on the other hand, argued that building Afghan institutions such as the police and the Army was necessary and the appropriate solution. What Afghanistan needed, he implied, was a centralised government (with strong institutions) that provided security to its entire people.<sup>245</sup>

Barnett Rubin, however, linked the failures of rebuilding the security reforms to the local Afghan networks, as their 'resilience undermined the establishment and functioning of stronger formal state institutions'.<sup>246</sup> Rubin argued that the Afghan ministries remained just buildings rather than functioning bureaucracies, and each successive owner brought its own people. The accelerated timetable of Bonn did not help either, as it created a dysfunctional system of government without effective institutions. Bird and Marshall disagreed with Rubin, as for them it was partly the result of a failed Western model based on 'the

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<sup>243</sup> Tanner, op. cit., p. 323; Jones, op. cit., p. 202; Jones, Seth G., 'It Takes the Villages: Bringing Change From Below in Afghanistan', *Foreign Affairs*, May/June, 2010, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/66350/seth-g-jones/it-takes-the-villages>>; Biddle, Stephen, 'Running out of time for Afghan Governance Reform; How Little Can We Live With?' *Foreign Affairs*, 2011, December 15, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136875/stephen-biddle/running-out-of-time-for-afghan-governance-reform>>; Blank, Jonah, 'Q&A With Jonah Blank on Afghanistan; The 'Best-Case Scenario' for the United States', *Foreign Affairs*, September 7, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/discussions/interviews/qa-with-jonah-blank-on-afghanistan>>; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., pp. 160, 163; Saikal, Amin. 2014. *Zone of crisis: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Iraq*. London: I. B. Tauris & Co, pp. 8-11; Flood, Philip, 'Book review: Zone of Crisis Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Iraq by Amin Saikal', *The Sunday Morning Herald*, October 10, 2014.

<sup>244</sup> Bird and Marshall, op. cit., pp. 160, 163.

<sup>245</sup> Jawad, op. cit.

<sup>246</sup> Rubin is quoted in Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 130.

decentralized, and economically highly privatized, liberal peace theory agenda'.<sup>247</sup> Liberal peace theory emphasises 'high-speed institution-building' before liberalisation, and turns the government into enabler rather than provider or facilitator. It had worked for the West to decentralise the economy, but this externally dictated agenda did not work for Afghanistan. By making the state the enabler and the global private sector the facilitator of reconstruction, the state in Afghanistan was left abstract. '[P]olitical and economic liberalization in practice generated destabilizing side-effects in war-shattered states, which then actually perpetuated instability'.<sup>248</sup> In Afghanistan it encouraged the rebuilding of the wrong kind of state where warlordism and the absence of effective bureaucracy were its 'natural by-products'.<sup>249</sup>

US Pakistan policy has been subject to heated debate, and the contested policy area was whether the Bush and Obama Administrations should get tough towards Pakistan for its two-faced policy. Khalilzad, Krasner, Peter Tomsen, Robert Singh, and Seth Jones were all in favour.<sup>250</sup> They recommended a number of options, including a reduction in military assistance, asking financial institutions (e.g. the International Monetary Fund) to curtail their support for programmes, and using military operations within Pakistan against known terrorist targets. And if these measures still failed, the US should explore a long-term effort to contain, isolate, or even declare Pakistan a state sponsoring terrorism. Bearden, Shuja Nawaz, C. Christine Fair, Samina Ahmed, Jonah Blank, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Moeed Yusuf, and many others, on the other hand, disagreed,<sup>251</sup> arguing against containing Pakistan,

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<sup>247</sup>Ibid., p.131.

<sup>248</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>249</sup>Ibid., pp. 131, 161.

<sup>250</sup>Singh, op. cit., pp. 84-85; Khalilzad, Zalmay, 'The Three Futures for Afghanistan; Why the country Needs a Long-Term Commitment From the United States', *Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism*, December 15, 2011, <<http://cpost.uchicago.edu/blog/2011/12/15/zalmay-khalilzad-the-three-futures-for-afghanistan-why-the-country-needs-a-long-term-commitment-from-the-united-states/>>; Krasner, Stephen D, 'Talking Tough to Pakistan; How to End Islamabad's Defiance', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2012, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136696/stephen-d-krasner/talking-tough-to-pakistan>>; Jones, op. cit.; Peter Tomsen is quoted in Blank, Jonah, 'Invading Afghanistan, Then and Now', *Foreign Affairs*, September/October, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68214/jonah-blank/invading-afghanistan-then-and-now>>

<sup>251</sup>Bearden, Milton, 'Obama's War: Redefining Victory in Afghanistan and Pakistan', *Foreign Affairs*, April 9, 2009, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64925/milton-bearden/obamas-war>>; Nawaz, Shuja, 'The Pakistan dilemma; What the Military's Recent Behavior Says About U.S.-Pakistan Ties', *Foreign Affairs*, May 2, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67817/shuja-nawaz/the-pakistan-dilemma>>; Fair, C. Christine, 'Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and Other Extremist Groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 24, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/al-qaeda-the-taliban-and-other-extremist-groups-in-afghanistan-and-pakistan>>; Ahmed, Samina, 'Assessing U.S. Policy and Its Limit in Pakistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 5, 2011,

because managing threats emanating from Pakistan were only possible by a long-term relationship with Pakistan. If there is more pressure by the US, the Pakistani Government could collapse, losing control of its nuclear weapons to terrorists. Keeping some level of cooperation and the continuation of providing military and civilian assistance to Pakistan would continue to help prevent bad situations from becoming worse. Pakistan had the ability to further undermine US efforts in Afghanistan by intensifying its support for TB, giving its nuclear weapons to US enemies, or interfering with US supplies transported daily through the Khyber Pass and Spin Boldak. Jonah Blank in the same article went a step further by questioning Tomsen's wisdom, that is, whether it was strategically wise to trade a potential disaster in Afghanistan for a potential disaster in Pakistan with a 185 million population and in possession of the world's fifth-largest nuclear arsenal. Both the Bush and Obama Administrations were also accused of failing to make a concrete effort to solve the territorial tensions between India and Pakistan,<sup>252</sup> which were seen as the solution to the Afghanistan conflict. Numerous others, on the other hand, disagreed, claiming that, even if a solution was offered for the Kashmir problem, Pakistan would still continue to support certain terrorist groups, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Afghan TB, for other strategic *and* domestic purposes, including using these terrorist groups to fight those extreme groups that aimed their violence against the state of Pakistan.<sup>253</sup>

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<<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/assessing-us-policy-and-its-limits-in-pakistan>>; Blank, Jonah, 'Invading Afghanistan, Then and Now', *Foreign Affairs*, September/October, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68214/jonah-blank/invading-afghanistan-then-and-now>>; Brzezinski, Zbigniew, 'From Hope to Audacity; Appraising Obama's Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2010, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65720/zbigniew-brzezinski/from-hope-to-audacity>>; Yusuf, Moeed, 'Assessing U.S. Policy and Its Limits in Pakistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 5, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/assessing-us-policy-and-its-limits-in-pakistan>>; Markey, Daniel, 'A False Choice in Pakistan', *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2007, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/62648/daniel-markey/a-false-choice-in-pakistan>>; Christophe, Jaffrelot, 'What engagement with Pakistan Can – And Can't – Do', *Foreign Affairs*, 2011, October 12, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136413/christophe-jaffrelot/what-engagement-with-pakistan-can-and-cant-do>>

<sup>252</sup>Bearden (2009), op. cit.; Tanner, op. cit., p. 345; Jones (2009), op. cit., p. 323.

<sup>253</sup>Fair, op. cit., Haass, Richard N., 'Hearing on Afghanistan: What is an Acceptable End-State, and How Do We Get There?', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 3, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/afghanistan-what-is-an-acceptable-end-state-and-how-do-we-get-there>>; Krepon, Michael, 'Assessing U.S. Policy and Its Limits in Pakistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 5, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/assessing-us-policy-and-its-limits-in-pakistan>>; Neumann, Ronald E., 'Hearing on Afghanistan: What is an Acceptable End-State, and How Do We Get There?', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 3, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/afghanistan-what-is-an-acceptable-end-state-and-how-do-we-get-there>>; Ahmed, op. cit.; Christophe, op. cit.

### **PHASE 3**

In the first years of Obama in office, a great deal of literature covered the Afghanistan War, especially the decision to surge in late-2009 (and the decision to withdraw in 2011). The literature was sharply split, offering opposing views in regard to the Afghanistan War and whether to surge. While chapter five (and six for the decision to withdraw) deals with all the contrasting views in detail, they are briefly considered here in order to give them life. TB were said to be not international terrorists, had only internal aims, were only in conflict with the US because the latter interfered in the political and social order that TB wanted for Afghanistan, and were separate from AQ because neither did AQ have resources and manpower to give to TB, nor did TB hold a substantial part of Afghanistan to provide safe haven for AQ. Even if Afghanistan fell to TB, US national security would not be in danger, as, given the national security risk AQ posed to Afghanistan, TB would not allow AQ to establish bases in Afghanistan. Since TB was not an enemy and AQ would not return to Afghanistan, the country was not strategically important to warrant the employability of the expensive counter-insurgency strategy. The Afghanistan War had already become very expensive, causing the Obama Administration to overlook other national and international interests. They feared that over the years, especially when Obama took office, the Afghanistan War gradually absorbed more and more US manpower and resources. The experience resembled the Vietnam War. In Vietnam the US (eventually) applied a counter-insurgency strategy, and in Afghanistan the applicability of the strategy meant around 100,000 US ground forces (for a duration of at least seven to ten years) were set to rebuild Afghanistan (nation-building). Given the dire US economic conditions, neither could the Obama Administration afford such an expensive strategy, nor did the right conditions exist in Afghanistan for the strategy. The strategy required, among others, competent national government, sufficient security forces, safe borders and helpful neighbours. The first two were a must in order to be able to hold and build areas cleared by US forces. In Afghanistan the government was corrupt; its leader (Karzai) inept and incompetent; the security forces had numerous shortcomings such as illiteracy and incompetency; and Afghanistan's neighbours (with some of whom Afghanistan shared thousands of miles of porous borders, such as Pakistan) competed for influence within the Afghan Government. No matter how many troops or how many resources they applied, they would not succeed because areas cleared could not be held and built, and

most importantly, *transferred*, due to the missing conditions – and the safe havens in Pakistan would remain untouched and Pakistan would continue to support insurgency in Afghanistan. Instead of a counter-insurgency strategy, they proposed a counterterrorism strategy, as it matched US national security interests and did not go beyond its means. Those arguments are found in the works by Michael Crowley, George Will, Andrew J. Bacevich, Thomas H. Johnson, Steven Simon, Ann Tyson, Rory Stewart, David Ignatius, John Mueller, and, to a lesser extent, Milton Bearden and Maleeha Lodhi.<sup>254</sup>

On the other hand, there were several works that disagreed, arguing that US presence in Afghanistan ensured Afghanistan, Pakistan and the region did not become destabilised by stopping TB and AQ taking over large parts in Afghanistan (and even in nuclear Pakistan) to secure safe bases from where attacks could be planned once again against the US and its allies. It was important to defeat TB (degrade was insufficient for them) since AQ's survival was linked to TB's strength. They argued that cheap strategies like counterterrorism or counterterrorism-plus or counter-insurgency-minus would not work because they were unable to provide security to the Afghans. These low-cost strategies had been tried in Afghanistan (and Iraq before Petraeus successfully employed a counter-insurgency strategy in early 2007) since 2002, but caused nothing but TB resurgence. Basing their assumptions on the experience of the application of the counter-insurgency strategy in Iraq, they believed that once ordinary Afghans were provided with *security*, the US would then be able to improve governance, establish security forces, and minimise the role of safe havens in Pakistan, since the Afghans would stand by their government and report troublemakers

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<sup>254</sup>Crowley, Michael, 'Hawk Down', *New Republic*, September 24, 2009, <<http://www.newrepublic.com/article/politics/hawk-down>>; Will, George F., 'Time to Get Out of Afghanistan', *The Washington Post*, September 01, 2009; views of Andrew J. Bacevich and Thomas H. Johnson in 'Topic A: Is the War in Afghanistan Worth Fight?' *The Washington Post*, August 31, 2009; Simon, Steven, 'Can the Right War Be Won? Defining American Interests in Afghanistan', *Council on Foreign Relations*, July/August, 2009, <<http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/can-right-war-won/p19765>>; Tyson, Ann Scott., 'Mullen: More Troops 'Probably' Needed', *The Washington Post*, September 16, 2009; Stewart, Rory, 'Testimony of Rory Stewart, Senate on Foreign Relations Committee Hearing', September 16, 2009, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/StewartTestimony090916p1.pdf>>; Ignatius, David, 'A Middle Way on Afghanistan', *The Washington Post*, September 2, 2009; Mueller, John, 'How Dangerous Are the Taliban: Why Afghanistan is the Wrong War', *The Foreign Affairs*, April 15, 2009, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64932/john-mueller/how-dangerous-are-the-taliban>>; Bearden (2009), op. cit.; Bearden, Milton, 'Afghanistan's Impact on Pakistan', October 1, 2009, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relation*, October 1, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/afghanistans-impact-on-pakistan>>; Lodhi, Maleeha, 'Afghanistan's Impact on Pakistan', October 1, 2009, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relation*, October 1, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/afghanistans-impact-on-pakistan>>

among them. (But for the opposing camps, Iraq was the wrong template for Afghanistan – Iraq’s circumstances were different to those of Afghanistan.) They flatly rebutted the comparison of the Afghanistan War with the Vietnam War because similar views had been present in relation to the Iraq War, but all proved baseless. Nor would the US experience the same fate as the Soviet Union, because the US was in Afghanistan to protect the Afghans but the Soviets were killing Afghans, and, unlike the Soviet Union, the US enjoyed the support of the majority of the Afghans.<sup>255</sup> A large volume of literature converges on these views. Among the contributors are Michael Gerson, Seth Jones, William Kristol, Ahmed Rashid, John Nagl, Erin M. Simpson, Clinton Douglas, Max Boot, Stephen Biddle, Barbara Elias, Kim Baker, Frederick and Kimberly Kagan, Mark Mayor, Fotini Christia, Michael Semple, and David Kilcullen.<sup>256</sup>

Numerous scholars wrote about the surge decision itself. Robert Singh claimed that Obama’s surge showed a compromise on the President’s side when he announced the ‘surge and drawdown strategy’, trying to please those who wanted a counter-insurgency strategy (the military and some high-profile Republicans), but at the same time trying to satisfy those (Vice-President Joe Biden and other counterterrorism-plus advocates) who did

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<sup>255</sup>But Tanner and Bearden disagreed, saying that the Obama Administration did not face anymore a ‘formally discredited Afghan religious movement’ but a population of Pashtunistan, which no previous empires had managed to defeat, Bearden (2009), op. cit.; and, Tanner, op. cit., p. 345.

<sup>256</sup> Gerson, Michael, ‘In Afghanistan, No Choice but to Try’, *The Washington Post*, September 4, 2009; Jones, op. cit.; Kristol, William, ‘No Will, No Way’, *The Washington Post*, 2009, September 1, 2009; Rashid, op. cit.; Nagl, John A., ‘“A ‘Better War’ in Afghanistan” Prepared Statement of Dr. John A. Nagl President, Center for a New American Security’, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, September 16, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/NaglTestimony090916p1.pdf>>; views of Erin M. Simpson and Clinton Douglas in ‘Topic A: Is the War in Afghanistan Worth Fight?’ *The Washington Post*, August 31, 2009; Boot, Max, ‘Anyone but Karzai?’, *The Washington Post*, February 13, 2009; Biddle, Stephen, ‘“Assessing the Case for War in Afghanistan” Statement by Dr. Stephen Biddle Senior Fellow for Defense Policy Council on Foreign Relations’, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, September 16, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/BiddleTestimony090916p.pdf>>; Elias, Barbara, ‘Know Thine Enemy; Why the Taliban Cannot Be Flipped’, *Foreign Affairs*, November 2, 2009, 2013, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65639/barbara-elias/know-thine-enemy>>; Baker, Kim, ‘Letter From Kabul: Solving Afghanistan’s Problems; What the United States Must Overcome in Afghanistan’, *Foreign Affairs*, 2009, November 30, 2009, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/features/letters-from/letter-from-kabul-solving-afghanistans-problems>>; Kagan, Frederick, ‘We’re Not the Soviets in Afghanistan; and 2009 isn’t 1979’, *Weekly Standard*, August 21, 2009, <<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/016/854qadbb.asp>>; Mayor, Mark, ‘The L-Word in Afghanistan; Can the United States Provide What Kabul Needs’, *Foreign Affairs*, November 15, 2009, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65681/mark-moyar/the-l-word-in-afghanistan>>; Christia, Fotini, Michael Semple, ‘Flipping the Taliban; How to Win in Afghanistan’, *Foreign Affairs*, July/August, 2009, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65151/fotini-christia-and-michael-semble/flipping-the-taliban>>; David Kilcullen is quoted in Simon, Steven, ‘Can the Right War Be Won? Defining American Interests in Afghanistan’, *Council on Foreign Relations*, July/August, 2009, <<http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/can-right-war-won/p19765>>

not want the US to commit to an open-ended war in Afghanistan.<sup>257</sup> In the views of Singh, Michael O'Hanlon, Martin Indyk, Kenneth Lieberthal, and Bob Woodward, the decision showed a lack of decisiveness and resolve on the President's part.<sup>258</sup> Others argued that his decision was carefully calculated, as he did not want Afghanistan to become the US's 'quagmire', and it also signalled to Kabul that the US commitment was not open-ended.<sup>259</sup>

## PHASE 4

When Obama was considering to draw down the 30,000 (+3,000) troops in 2011, similar views were expressed once again, thus even further enriching the literature on the Afghanistan War. Those who supported a continuous expensive US commitment in Afghanistan were Stephen Biddle,<sup>260</sup> David Kilcullen,<sup>261</sup> Ryan C. Crocker,<sup>262</sup> Max Boot,<sup>263</sup> Frederick and Kimberly Kagan,<sup>264</sup> Ronald E. Neumann,<sup>265</sup> Zainab Salbi,<sup>266</sup> Scott Seward Smith,<sup>267</sup> Michael O'Hanlon,<sup>268</sup> Seth Jones,<sup>269</sup> Peter Bergen,<sup>270</sup> Fotini Christia,<sup>271</sup> Gayle

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<sup>257</sup> Singh, op. cit., pp. 73-77.

<sup>258</sup> Woodward (2009), op. cit.; Singh, op. cit., pp. 73-77; Indyk, Lieberthal, and O'Hanlon, op. cit., pp. 86-98.

<sup>259</sup> They are quoted in Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 236; and, Indyk, Lieberthal, and O'Hanlon, op. cit., pp. 86-98.

<sup>260</sup> Biddle, Stephen, 'Steps Needed for a Successful 2014 Transition in Afghanistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 10, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/steps-needed-for-a-successful-2014-transition-in-afghanistan>>; and Biddle, Stephen, 'Running out of time for Afghan Governance Reform; How Little Can We Live With?' *Foreign Affairs*, 2011, December 15, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136875/stephen-biddle/running-out-of-time-for-afghan-governance-reform>>

<sup>261</sup> Kilcullen, David, 'Perspectives on Reconciliation Options in Afghanistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, 2010, July 27, 2010, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/perspectives-on-reconciliation-options-in-afghanistan>>

<sup>262</sup> Crocker, Ryan C., 'Countering the Threat of Failure in Afghanistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, September 17, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/countering-the-threat-of-failure-in-afghanistan>>

<sup>263</sup> Bernard Gwetzman Interviews Max Boot. 'The Road to Negotiation in Afghanistan', *the Council on Foreign Relations*, October 18, 2010.

<sup>264</sup> Kagan, Frederick, Kimberly Kagan, 'The Case for Continuing the Counterinsurgency Campaign In Afghanistan', *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research*, December 16, 2011, <<http://www.criticalthreats.org/afghanistan/kagan-case-continuing-counterinsurgency-campaign-december-16-2011>>

<sup>265</sup> Neumann, Ronald E., 'Hearing on Afghanistan: What is an Acceptable End-State, and How Do We Get There?', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 3, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/afghanistan-what-is-an-acceptable-end-state-and-how-do-we-get-there>>

<sup>266</sup> Salbi, Zainab, 'Perspectives on Reconciliation Options in Afghanistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, July 27, 2010, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/perspectives-on-reconciliation-options-in-afghanistan>>

<sup>267</sup> Smith, Scott Seward, 'Making Withdrawal Work; A Smaller U.S. Footprint Will Make Afghanistan More Stable', *Foreign Affairs*, August 15, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68015/scott-seward-smith/making-withdrawal-work>>



Tzemach Lemmon,<sup>272</sup> James Dobbins,<sup>273</sup> Karen DeYoung,<sup>274</sup> and, to some extent, Ivan Arreguín-Toft,<sup>275</sup> Stephen Hadley and John Podesta.<sup>276</sup> Their views could be summarised as follows: resist the flawed counterterrorism strategy; continue with the counter-insurgency strategy (which, for them, has shown good results) for a few more years until the Afghan Government and its national security forces develop the capacity to counter the insurgents; provide a long-term programme beyond 2011 and 2014 to support Afghanistan's government and its security forces; aim for a fairly and reasonably 'strong' Afghan state (which was not the case in 2011, and the absence of which made the possibility of reconciliation with TB not viable); and do not accept defeat (by withdrawing prematurely) because it would have disastrous consequences for the US and the allies. If all their suggestions were followed, success was possible.

On the other hand, those who advocated for a lighter US presence disagreed, arguing that keeping the same number of troops would *not* serve US national security interests. Though they supported a long-term US commitment to Afghanistan (albeit a modest one, which could be justified by US national security interests), they were pessimistic about the future of Afghanistan, and, regardless of what strategy the US applied, a future Afghanistan would continue to have a weak, inept and corrupt government with insufficient Afghan National Security Forces, regional powers, especially Pakistan, would continue to interfere in Afghanistan, and Afghanistan's dire financial situation, as well as its ethnic, tribal and

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<sup>268</sup> O'Hanlon, Michael, 'Staying Power: The U.S. Mission in Afghanistan Beyond 2011', *The Brookings Institution*, September/October, 2010, <<http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2010/08/25-afghanistan-ohanlon>>

<sup>269</sup> Jones, Seth G., 'It Takes the Villages: Bringing Change From Below in Afghanistan', *Foreign Affairs*, May/June, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/66350/seth-g-jones/it-takes-the-villages>>

<sup>270</sup> Bergen, Peter, 'Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and Other Extremist Groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 24, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/al-qaeda-the-taliban-and-other-extremist-groups-in-afghanistan-and-pakistan>>

<sup>271</sup> Christia, op. cit.

<sup>272</sup> Lemmon, Gayle Tzemach, 'What Leaving Afghanistan Will Cost; Parsing the President's War Promises' *Foreign Affairs*, May 9, 2012, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137621/gayle-tzemach-lemmon/what-leaving-afghanistan-will-cost>>

<sup>273</sup> Dobbins, James, 'Your COIN Is NO Good Here: How "Counterinsurgency" Became a Dirty Word', *Foreign Affairs*, October 26, 2010, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/66949/james-dobbins/your-coin-is-no-good-here>>

<sup>274</sup> DeYoung, Karen. 'Without large U.S. force after 2014, Afghanistan is headed for civil war, opposition leader warns', *The Washington Post*, Nov 17, 2011.

<sup>275</sup> Arreguín-Toft, Ivan, 'Washington Colonial Conundrum in Afghanistan; Why the United States Cannot Stay Forever?' *Foreign Affairs*, 2011, December 15, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136881/ivan-arreguin-toft/washingtons-colonial-conundrum-in-afghanistan>>

<sup>276</sup> Neumann, Ronald, Stephen Hadley and John D. Podesta, 'Afghan Endgame: How to Help Kabul Stand on Its Own', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December, 2012, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138215/ronald-e-neumann-stephen-hadley-and-john-d-podesta/afghan-endgame>>



religious complexities, would continue to create obstacles. Their implication was that the US would not be able to bring an end to Afghanistan's civil war due to these complexities. So it made no sense to keep 100,000 US troops, spend a large amount of dollars, and sacrifice hundreds of American lives when they accomplished *little* and there was no end in sight. They proposed that success in Afghanistan meant aiming for a 'good enough' Afghan Government (not a fairly 'strong' one that required years of large commitment) able to hold off TB and AQ with modest military and financial US support. This would allow the US to withdraw most of its troops and leave a small and sustainable number to conduct counterterrorism operations. It would also permit the US to take into account its other domestic and international interests. These views were argued by Richard Haass,<sup>277</sup> Michael Krepon,<sup>278</sup> Paul R. Pillar,<sup>279</sup> Michael Mandelbaum,<sup>280</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski,<sup>281</sup> General David Barno, Linda Robinson,<sup>282</sup> Paul Yingling,<sup>283</sup> Bird and Marshall,<sup>284</sup> Jonah Blank,<sup>285</sup> Robert Blackwill,<sup>286</sup> Toby Dodge and Nicholas Redman.<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>277</sup>Haass, Richard N., 'Hearing on Afghanistan: What is an Acceptable End-State, and How Do We Get There?', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 3, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/afghanistan-what-is-an-acceptable-end-state-and-how-do-we-get-there>>

<sup>278</sup>Krepon, Michael, 'Assessing U.S. Policy and Its Limits in Pakistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 5, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/assessing-us-policy-and-its-limits-in-pakistan>>

<sup>279</sup>Pillar, Paul R., 'Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and Other Extremist Groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 24, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/al-qaeda-the-taliban-and-other-extremist-groups-in-afghanistan-and-pakistan>>

<sup>280</sup>Mandelbaum, Michael, 'America's Coming Retrenchment; How Budget Cuts Will Limit the United States' Global Role,' *Foreign Affairs*, August 9, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68024/michael-mandelbaum/americas-coming-retrenchment>>

<sup>281</sup>Brzezinski, op. cit.

<sup>282</sup>David Barno and Linda Robinson quoted in Fredrick and Kimberly Kagan, op. cit.

<sup>283</sup>Yingling, Paul L., 'An Absence of Strategic Think: On the Multitude of Lessons Not Learned in Afghanistan', *Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism*, December 15, 2011, <<http://cpost.uchicago.edu/blog/2011/12/15/paul-l-yingling-an-absence-of-strategic-thinking-on-the-multitude-of-lessons-not-learned-in-afghanistan/>>

<sup>284</sup>Bird and Marshall, op. cit., pp. 230-234, 245.

<sup>285</sup>Blank, Jonah, 'Q&A With Jonah Blank on Afghanistan; The 'Best-Case Scenario' for the United States', *Foreign Affairs*, 2011, September 7, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/discussions/interviews/qa-with-jonah-blank-on-afghanistan>>

<sup>286</sup>Blackwill, Robert D, 'Plan B in Afghanistan: Why a De Facto Partition Is the Least Bad Option', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2011, <2011,<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67026/robert-d-blackwill/plan-b-in-afghanistan>>

<sup>287</sup>Dodge, Toby, and Nicholas Redman. 2011. *Afghanistan: to 2015 and beyond*, London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, pp. 101, 165.

## **CONCLUSION**

The literature review part of the chapter outlined the literature on US foreign policy towards Afghanistan. It first summarised a number of possible motives for US intervention in Afghanistan, and then looked at the dynamics of foreign policymaking within the Bush and Obama Administrations. As far as policymaking is concerned, the influential actors within both administrations were addressed. Finally, the literature on US Afghan policy was divided into four phases: addressing works developed in 2001; works between 2004 and early 2008; works developed for the decision to surge in 2009; and literature concerning the decision to withdraw in 2011. The conclusions from these four phases could be drawn as follows: in 2001 most sources in the literature were concerned with the possibility of the US becoming bogged down in Afghanistan; between 2004 and 2008, almost every work on US Afghan policy was critical of the Bush Administration's Afghan strategy; for the decisions to surge in 2009 and to withdraw in 2011 scholars were divided on the merit of the Afghanistan War and on what was the best way to proceed in Afghanistan.

As explained above, literature regarding the decision-making process within the two administrations is narrow. Literature covering decision-making towards Afghanistan during both administrations is very little. Works concerning the influences of different variables upon decision-making, especially in relation to policymaking towards Afghanistan, are equally thin. Only a small number of sources touch upon the inner dealings of the two administrations, especially the impact of bureaucratic politics on policymaking; it is even more the case in relation to decision-making towards Afghanistan. This thesis makes an attempt to fill these gaps, in addition to seeking to pinpoint the right motive for US intervention in Afghanistan. However, the prominent contribution this thesis is trying to make is to provide a contemporary history of US Afghan policy from its intervention to the decision to begin to exist.

# THE DECISION TO INTERVENE

## INTRODUCTION

Although later decision-making in the Bush Administration was conducted in secrecy and without much deliberation, the decision to intervene in Afghanistan to a certain extent was deliberate and open. President Bush listened to the viewpoints of his advisors before making the final decision. This chapter is structured in the light of the decision-making process that President Bush followed. It has three sections in addition to the concluding section. As part of the requirements of external and internal factors of the Foreign Policy Decision-Making (FPDM) Approach, section one makes an attempt to find out answers to the 'why' question by claiming that the personal characteristics of Bush and some of his advisors, especially the belief system and images of the President, as well as domestic factors, were two causal factors that shaped the resulting decision. The tendency of President Bush to act upon his 'gut feelings' and 'instincts' and consequently make up doctrines without thinking about their vast consequences contributed greatly to the making of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) strategy, with Afghanistan being its first station. Bush's belief system to view the US as the saviour of those who were oppressed, or seeing the GWOT as good versus evil, and to confront terrorism offensively as opposed to defensively, was another causal factor that contributed to the decision to involve the United States (US) in such a broad anti-terrorism war. The 'public-media-Congress pressure' upon the President to *do something* was yet another causal factor. The milieu in which the policymakers operated during the decision-making period to intervene in Afghanistan was one of the most important independent variables; a constant fear of further attacks by terrorists, attacks involving weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in particular, and the constant pressure upon the President to do something to defuse the threat greatly impacted the resulting GWOT decision.

Using Steven L. Lamy's framework from the FPDM Approach, section two attempts to ascertain 'how' the policy of the GWOT, which began in Afghanistan, was *formulated* by focusing on two substantive and result-producing National Security Council (NSC) meetings: the first and the last as far as policymaking was concerned. Section three covers the 'what' question, namely, what the end policy for Afghanistan became. While chapter four deals in detail with bureaucratic politics in the Bush Administration, section two and section three also make an attempt to touch upon some bureaucratic considerations relating to the decision to intervene. It is clear that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is more involved in policymaking than any other US bureaucracy. However, the Defense Department, supported by the Office of the Vice-President, strongly shaped the overall strategy for the GWOT. Section three also provides a summary of how the three variables impacted the decision to intervene in Afghanistan.

### 3.1. THE 'WHY' QUESTION

**3.1.1. 'A second plane hit the second tower. America is under attack.'** Pressing his head next to the President, the White House Chief of Staff Andrew H. Card Jr pronounced the above words to President Bush, whose inward reaction was then, *'They had declared war on us and I made up my mind at that moment that we were going to war.'*<sup>1</sup>

President Bush recalled his thoughts and emotions of the time when he learned about the planes' crashes: he was outraged, as someone had dared to attack America, and they were to pay.<sup>2</sup> Later that morning in his first conversation with Cheney, Bush declared that the US was at war. A moment later, President Bush told some of his staff in Air Force One, the President's airplane, that the US was at war, and when he found out who the perpetrators were, they were not going to 'like [Bush] as president'.<sup>3</sup> This declaration also allowed Article II of the American Constitution to kick in, giving the President wartime powers as a commander-in-chief. It was an extraordinary declaration, not just because of Article II or because it was made *spontaneously* and in the *heat* of the moment without consulting anyone from his War Cabinet, but because it was a break with US past, which had treated terrorist acts as criminal or a law enforcement action (arresting and indicting). The 9/11 attacks were treated as an act of war because al Qaeda (AQ) managed to kill thousands in the course of a few hours. AQ's objective was 'mass murder' and, in the light of WMD,

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<sup>1</sup>Woodward, Bob. 2002. *Bush at war*. New York: Simon & Schuster, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Bush, George W. 2010. *Decision points*. New York: Crown publishers, p. 128.

<sup>3</sup>Woodward, op. cit., p. 17.

especially in the hands of rogue states, AQ could manage (and did manage) to achieve its aims. The killing of thousands, and, if involving some forms of WMD, possibly hundreds of thousands, did amount to an act of war and was consequently treated as such.<sup>4</sup>

On the same day at 3:30 p.m. via a video conference President Bush called his first NSC meeting following the terrorist attacks from Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska, where he was taken for his own safety. CIA Director George Tenet told him that all the signs – known AQ members on the planes, AQ operatives being picked up by intelligence monitoring congratulating each other, and only AQ being capable of such sophisticated and coordinated attacks – linked the attacks to AQ based in Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup> Bush declared his intention: he would not send a million-dollar missile to hit a five-dollar tent, but rather respond deliberately, forcefully, and effectively by involving US ground forces.<sup>6</sup> He was to start the war (for preventative self-defence) on the offensive by attacking the terrorists overseas before they could attack the US again at home.<sup>7</sup> Again Bush made the decision to involve ground troops in an offensive war in the heat of the moment.

On that very day, Bush declared to his principals that the US would not distinguish between terrorists and those who harboured them.<sup>8</sup> By inventing the 'no distinction' doctrine, Bush wanted to overturn 'the approach of the past, which treated terrorist groups as distinct from their sponsors'.<sup>9</sup> Committing the US to this incredible task, asserted Woodward, was the decision of President Bush alone. Cheney, Rumsfeld and Powell between them had a hundred years of experience in dealing with national security matters, while Bush did not have a single one, yet he consulted none of them.<sup>10</sup> The doctrine later became known as one of the 'most significant foreign policy decisions in years and yet the

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<sup>4</sup>Feith, Douglas J., 2008. *War and decision: inside the Pentagon at the dawn of the year War on terrorism*. New York, NY: Harper, pp. 4, 17-21.

<sup>5</sup>Woodward (2002), op. cit., pp. 26-27; Tenet, George, and Bill Harlow. 2007. *At the centre of the storm: my years at the CIA*. New York: HarperCollins Publisher, pp. 255-256, 259.

<sup>6</sup> Bush, op. cit., p. 135.

<sup>7</sup>Bush, op. cit., p. 137; Gordon, Philip H., 'Can the War on Terror Be Won? How to Fight the Right War', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December, 2007, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63009/philip-h-gordon/can-the-war-on-terror-be-won>>

<sup>8</sup>Leffler, Melvyn P., 'September 11 in Retrospect; George W. Bush's Grand Strategy, Reconsidered', *Foreign Affairs*, September/October, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68201/melvyn-p-leffler/september-11-in-retrospect>>; Bush, George W, Address to the Nation on the Terrorist Attacks, September 11, 2001, <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=58057>>

<sup>9</sup>Bush, op. cit., p. 137.

<sup>10</sup>Woodward (2002), op. cit., p. 30.

Secretary of State had not been involved'.<sup>11</sup> However, the above three reportedly supported the doctrine.<sup>12</sup>

As a matter of fact, Rumsfeld had been one of the proponents of the doctrine of no distinction since 1984. In his speech in 1984 he had said that there was no distinction between terrorism and states sponsoring it, and he had characterised terrorism as 'a form of warfare, and must be treated as such'.<sup>13</sup> Cheney, too, was supportive of the doctrine of no distinction,<sup>14</sup> arguing that, before 9/11, the US had dealt with terrorism as law enforcement action, but that approach had not worked as AQ delivered a major blow to the US on 9/11. So the US decided to wage war against terrorists so that it could go after them where they lived to root them out before they attacked.<sup>15</sup> They could not root out terrorists unless they treated equally those states that supported terrorists.<sup>16</sup>

Bush's thinking might have been influenced (as will be seen below and in chapters three and four) by Rumsfeld and Cheney prior to the 9/11 events, but, as has been seen above, Bush consulted no one between the 9/11 terrorist acts and the 9 p.m. NSC meeting, a period of twelve hours in which Bush made four major decisions on US foreign policies: the announcement of the US being at war with terrorism; the invention of the doctrines of no distinction; preventative self-defence; and taking the war overseas to the enemy. One could, therefore, claim that the announcement of war and the making of the three doctrines were decisions made by Bush alone; it was the outcome of his 'gut reaction' to the 9/11 events.<sup>17</sup> Bush as a person, as President, was largely responsible for intervening in Afghanistan because it was these doctrines as well as the declaration of war that brought Afghanistan to the forefront of the US campaign against terrorism. AQ had been freely operating from Afghanistan since the Taliban (TB) had taken Kabul in 1996, and AQ was held responsible for the 9/11 terrorist strikes. The TB regime was supporting AQ by providing it with free movement and bases where AQ trained terrorists against US assets. Consequently, all the administration's focus turned to bring the harbourers, the TB regime, to justice.

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 31-31.

<sup>12</sup>Rice, Condoleezza. 2011. *No higher honour: a memoir of my years in Washington*. London: Simon & Schuster, p. 77.

<sup>13</sup>Rumsfeld, Donald. 2011. *Known and unknown: a memoir*. New York: sentinel, p. 342.

<sup>14</sup>Cheney, Richard B., and Liz Cheney. 2011. *In my time: a personal and political memoir*. New York: Threshold Edition, p. 331.

<sup>15</sup>Leffler, op. cit.

<sup>16</sup>Cheney, op. cit., P. 330.

<sup>17</sup>Woodward (2002), op. cit., p. 16.

'Justice' was the main theme for President Bush in the first few days of 9/11 until he was advised by officials from the Defense Department, mainly Rumsfeld, that the main US goal was *not* to punish, reattribute or retaliate, but to protect America; Rumsfeld remarked that in the first days Bush blurted out what sprang to his mind,<sup>18</sup> including calling the US struggle against terrorism 'a crusade against evil'.<sup>19</sup> The protection of Americans meant *preventing* further attacks. To prevent further attacks and keep the US safe, the US needed to take *pre-emptive* measures against AQ and TB who jointly posed a serious threat of further attacks. In doing so, the US would take the fight overseas to AQ in Afghanistan where AQ had bases supported by the TB. Afghanistan intervention therefore was out of 'necessity and self-defence, not revenge'.<sup>20</sup>

The important lesson this subsection tries to highlight is that Bush's tendency to make decisions without spending much time to analyse them was one of the main factors in the GWOT that began in Afghanistan. Both the articulation of war and the invention of the three doctrines potentially put the US at war with a faceless enemy scattered around many dozen countries, yet it took Bush a short time to make them.<sup>21</sup> These doctrines informed US foreign policy, especially the GWOT, for years to come,<sup>22</sup> but none of the advisors questioned them. Even if they had disagreed, they perhaps could have not changed Bush's mind since after the 9/11 atrocities Bush was 'much more in broadcasting mode - telling them [advisors] what he thought and what he was going to do and far less interested in hearing what they thought. Bush had no self-doubt; he was "the Decider."'”<sup>23</sup> Being a 'gut player' with a strong belief system and images, once Bush made his mind up it was difficult to persuade him to do otherwise.<sup>24</sup> Any policy ideas that did not fit Bush's intuitive sense

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<sup>18</sup>Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 342-343.

<sup>19</sup>Howard, Michael, 'What's In A Name?: How to Fight Terrorism', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2002, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/57615/michael-howard/whats-in-a-name-how-to-fight-terrorism>>

<sup>20</sup>Bush, op. cit., p. 184.

<sup>21</sup>Gordon, op. cit.

<sup>22</sup> Singh, Robert. 2012. *Barrack Obama's post-American foreign policy: the limits of engagement*. London: Bloomsbury academic, p. xxi.

<sup>23</sup>Daalder, Ivo H., and I. M. Destler, 'In the Shadow of the Oval Office; The Next National Security Advisor', *The Brookings Institution*, January/February, 2009,

<<http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2008/12/01-national-security-adviser-daalder>>

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

would be ignored by Bush. He knew what to do and all he wanted to hear, in the words of Powell, was how to get it done.<sup>25</sup>

**3.1.2 ‘...there is an image of America out there that we are so materialistic, that we’re almost hedonistic, that we don’t have values, and that when struck, we wouldn’t fight back.’** President Bush expresses his perception of the terrorists’ view of America under previous administrations, particularly the Clinton one.<sup>26</sup>

In a discussion between President-elect Bush and Donald Rumsfeld on the possibility of the latter becoming Secretary of Defense for the incoming Bush Administration, Rumsfeld shared the experiences, thoughts and beliefs he had formed over the years. Rumsfeld was unhappy with, and disappointed in, US reactions to terrorism – a major threat to the world as it had, especially when supported by a rogue nation, the capability of altering the behaviour of great nations<sup>27</sup> – in the past decades. The US decisions to withdraw from Beirut and Somalia under fire, and its failure to act vigorously in response to AQ’s lethal attack on USS Cole in Yemen, invited the enemies to act more aggressively. In the early 1980s in Beirut, for example, instead of being on the offensive and going after the terrorists, the Americans chose a defensive approach by installing cement barriers to protect themselves from terrorist attacks. When it did not work, the US had to withdraw. For Rumsfeld, ‘[t]he way to successfully deal with terrorists is not only to try to defend against them, but also to *take* the battle to them; to go after them *where* they live, *where* they hide; to go after their finances and their networks; and even to go after the *nations* that *harbor* and assist them. The best defense would be a good *offense* [emphasis added].’<sup>28</sup> In 1984, Rumsfeld and Reagan’s Secretary of State George Shultz had warned that the US could not afford to be a ‘global Hamlet’ (Shakespeare’s character is known for his reluctance to take action) while terrorism was on the rise. Rumsfeld and Shultz had recommended that America should be able to pre-empt a terrorist attack by responding in a variety of forms and could start ‘at times and places of our choosing’ –<sup>29</sup> the same words that would be pronounced by Bush 17 years later following the 9/11 terrorist attacks.<sup>30</sup> Rumsfeld told Bush

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<sup>25</sup>Nye, Jr, Joseph S., ‘Transformational Leadership and U.S. Grand Strategy’, *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2006, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/61740/joseph-s-nye-jr/transformational-leadership-and-us-grand-strategy>>

<sup>26</sup>Woodward (2002), op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>27</sup>Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>30</sup> Bush, George W, National Day of Prayer and Remembrance Service, September 14, 2001,



in the meeting that the former particularly was disappointed by the Clinton Administration's 'reflexive pullback' approach.<sup>31</sup> when America had been challenged or attacked, President Clinton often played softly by embracing a cautious, even squeamish response. In extreme cases, such as the bombing of the American embassies in East Africa that killed more than 200 and wounded more than 5,000, Clinton had used cruise missiles. The enemy, especially Osama bin Laden (OBL), took the inactions/retreats/squeamish responses by the US as a sign that the US was not willing to defend its interests because American soldiers were not willing to engage in long wars at battlefields and would flee once they were under attack.<sup>32</sup> These inactions/retreats/squeamish responses, caused partly by the Vietnam syndrome and partly by the bureaucracy in Washington, continued to show a lack of resolve on the US side and showcased America as vulnerable, irresolute and weak. 'Weakness is provocative... so is the perception of weakness', but strength would have deterred the terrorists' adventures, Rumsfeld told the President-elect, and the latter nodded in agreement.<sup>33</sup> In Rumsfeld's view, OBL had declared war on the US and by 9/11 he had been winning. However, Rumsfeld, if appointed Secretary of Defense, and if America found itself under attack by terrorists, would come to the President not for use of missiles but for 'a forward-leaning action plan'.<sup>34</sup> The plan would be to unleash US military against the perpetrators. Rumsfeld then told Bush that if Bush was uncomfortable with Rumsfeld's view, Rumsfeld was the wrong man for the job. Bush replied that Rumsfeld was the Secretary of Defense he had been looking for.<sup>35</sup>

President Bush equally believed that Clinton's approach to AQ's persistent attacks on US assets was weak to the extent that the administration invited AQ to attack again and again. In President Bush's opinion, a technically and militarily advanced America's response with missile attacks was frail, pathetic, and 'really a joke'.<sup>36</sup> It made America come across as impotent. It created a worldwide image that the American people had no values, and, when struck, were not willing to fight back. Bush agreed that US weak responses clearly

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<[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>31</sup>Woodward (2002), op. cit.

<sup>32</sup>Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 32-34.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 203, 282.

<sup>34</sup>Woodward (2002), op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.; Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 283.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

emboldened OBL and his followers.<sup>37</sup> George Tenet, too, observed in his memoir that US withdrawal from Somalia gave OBL a perception that the US was a soft target, a paper tiger, and was easier to defeat than the Soviet Union.<sup>38</sup> But that perception was not going to hold under the Bush Administration. When President Bush, proud of US abilities and not in Washington to play 'small ball',<sup>39</sup> and his advisors, mainly Rumsfeld, Tenet, and Cheney, suddenly found America under attack on 9/11 by AQ, headed by OBL, they were to prove OBL wrong: America was not a 'paper tiger [that] ran in less than twenty-four hours'.<sup>40</sup> AQ interpreted the US's lack of serious response as a sign of weakness, but Bush and his principals were determined to change that impression, and on Sunday, September 16 made a formal decision: America was to fight the 'war on terror on the offensive, and the first battlefield would be Afghanistan'.<sup>41</sup>

What this subsection tries to establish is that the (consistent) belief systems and images of Bush and Rumsfeld (and Cheney) of how terrorism/states sponsoring terrorism could be a major threat to the world and how to deal – offensively as opposed to defensively – with terrorism enormously helped construct the Bush Doctrines (which by 2002 were inserted into the 2002 National Security Strategy).<sup>42</sup> To put in practice these doctrines, Bush declared the GWOT, resulting in an American foreign policy that aimed at destroying and eliminating terrorism worldwide, which began in Afghanistan. Thus it was a question of *when* rather than *if* before the administration put its beliefs (formed in most cases by past experiences) of how to deal with terrorists into practice.

**3.1.3 'Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom, the great achievement of our time, and the great hope of every time now depends on us...' Bush in his Congress Speech to the Joint Houses on September, 20, 2001.**<sup>43</sup>

On a personal level, the freedom agenda for Bush was both idealistic and realistic.<sup>44</sup> Realistic, since it was the most practical way to protect America in the long run.<sup>45</sup> Idealistic,

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Tenet, op. cit., p. 155.

<sup>39</sup>Loyn, David. 2008. *Butcher and bolt*. London: Hutchinson, p. 293; Leffler, op. cit.; Bush, op. cit., p. 227; Nye, op. cit.

<sup>40</sup>Bush, op. cit., p. 191.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 191.

<sup>42</sup>Leffler, op. cit.

<sup>43</sup> Bush, George W. (2001). Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People. [The White House]. <<http://georgewbushwhite.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>>; Bush, George W, Address to the United Nations General Assembly, November 10, 2001, <[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

because Bush saw the spreading of liberty and democracy as a good deed that would remove fear and terror by oppressive regimes. The latter conviction was also based on his strong belief in Christianity. For him, the US (good) acted against terrorists (evil) to defend freedom (a practical gift from God) and release oppressed people from their cruel regimes.<sup>46</sup> His popularity among Americans in the first days after 9/11 seemed to have made him believe that he (and America in general) would be perceived as good, as a hero, by those who are oppressed, and this emboldened his resolve further in the declaration of the GWOT.

However, it is important to mention that the freedom agenda became a central part of US objectives when the US could not find WMD in Iraq, the main justification the administration had used to invade Iraq.<sup>47</sup> It is then that the freedom agenda became known as one of Bush Doctrines. It is equally vital to mention that Bush was not a liberal internationalist. During his presidential debates, prior to his election, he did not talk about liberating women in Afghanistan, nor did he once mention ousting the TB regime or going after AQ: most of his campaign focus was on domestic policies, especially those relating to education, tax, and national defence.<sup>48</sup> There are some, including Rice herself, who attributed Bush's beliefs in the liberty agenda as one of the main variables for the GWOT.<sup>49</sup> But that did not seem to be on Bush's or other advisors' minds when they debated the Afghan strategy. During the research for this thesis, the author only *once* came across a policymaker (Rice) mentioning the freeing of Afghan women as a good cause to end the TB

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<sup>44</sup>Bush, op. cit., pp. 396-397.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Tanner, op. cit., pp. 291-94; Bush Speech to a Joint Session of Congress, op. cit.; Leffler, op. cit.; Bush, George W, Remarks at the National Prayer Breakfast, February 1, 2001, <[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>; Bush, George W, West Point Commencement, June 1, 2002, <[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>47</sup>Leffler, op. cit.; Bush, George W, Address to the Republican National Convention, September 2, 2004, <[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>; Bush, George, The Second Inaugural Address, January 20, 2005, <[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.; Dobriansky, Paula J., 'Democracy Promotion', *Foreign Affairs*, May/June, 2003, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/58981/paula-j-dobriansky-and-thomas-carothers/democracy-promotion>>

regime<sup>50</sup> during the decision-making for the GWOT. However, Bush and his advisors were aware that, after the defeat of the repressive TB regime, a free society was likely to emerge in Afghanistan.<sup>51</sup> So the freedom agenda, especially liberating Afghan women, was *incidental* to the main objective: to dismantle and defeat AQ and TB (a part of global terrorism) in order to maintain security in America. Otherwise, Afghan women have been repressed since the Mujahedeen victory in 1992, and, even though it had a moral duty after the Soviet withdrawal, the US had not only not helped them, but left Afghanistan to its own fate, and into the hands of its neighbours, who directly supported different factions of the Mujahedeen to fight between each other, which resulted in the killing of thousands of its nationals. However, the incidental after-effect of the overthrow of the TB regime was an excellent outcome for the Bush Administration, as it attracted broader support for the Afghan invasion.

**3.1.4 'George, find the bastards who did this and kill them.'** Looking square into his eyes, a firefighter at Ground Zero, who lost many of his colleagues, pleaded with President Bush.<sup>52</sup>

Calling him by his first name, asserts Bush, was a personal message from an electorate to its president. As he shook hands with others at Ground Zero, where he had gone to visit a few days after 9/11, he started to hear more pleadings: 'Do not let me down!'; 'Whatever it takes!'<sup>53</sup> There was understandably a bloodlust for revenge.<sup>54</sup> That day had a profound impact on Bush as he went through a variety of emotions: seeing the piles of the Twin Towers, he was totally shocked; incredibly proud when seeing firefighters and other volunteer citizens assisting their fellow countrymen around the clock; overwhelmed by the warmth he received from the New Yorkers; stunned when he witnessed how the crowd was hungry for revenge; and emotional when he met the families of those who had lost their loved ones.<sup>55</sup> In response to someone from the crowd at the back that they could not hear the President, Bush declared that he could hear them, the world heard them and soon those responsible for 9/11 would hear of all American people. The crowd exploded with a roar, striking up a chant of USA, USA, USA. The unrehearsed response by Bush, coming out on the

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<sup>50</sup>Rice, op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>51</sup> Bush, George W, Address to the Nation on Operations in Afghanistan, October 7, 2001, <[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>52</sup>Bush, op. cit., p. 148.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Woodward, op. cit., p. 69.

spur of the moment, made Bush feel incredible: 'It was a release of energy I had never felt before'.<sup>56</sup> For Bush, 'If it was possible to live a whole life in a single day, this was a day'.<sup>57</sup> This was the day he saw how determined the Americans were to carry out justice, and how clearly they wanted him to share their determination.<sup>58</sup> The encounter with the ordinary Americans at Ground Zero, who wanted their commander-in-chief to do something, further emboldened Bush's resolve.<sup>59</sup> It also dramatically increased the pressure on Bush and his War Cabinet to bring the perpetrators to justice 'whatever it took'.<sup>60</sup> So did the 24-hour cycle of the media.

The 24-hour media made 9/11– the most photographed and filmed 'violent assault in history', and in many ways, including the loss of American lives, surpassing Pearl Harbor –<sup>61</sup> much more impactful by playing over and over again the images of the plane crashing into the South Tower, desperate people jumping from the upper floors to their deaths to escape the unbearable heat inside, and most importantly, the towers collapsing one after the other.<sup>62</sup> The more the broadcasters played the images, the more obliged Bush felt to act with tenacity. When the war plan was delayed by the Defense Department (more below), Bush pushed for urgency, reasoning with his War Cabinet that the entire world was watching America's response, and most importantly, Americans had been through a shocking experience, and their patience would run out if they soon did not hear from their commander-in-chief about a war plan with a starting date to go after AQ.<sup>63</sup> The demands of those people he had met at Ground Zero were still on his mind, those who wanted him to bring the perpetrators to justice, when he pushed for an urgent war plan.<sup>64</sup> Bush refused to accept he had been hasty; he was decisive. Bush relied on his *instincts*, and his instincts had

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<sup>56</sup>Bush, op. cit., p. 149.

<sup>57</sup>Woodward, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>58</sup>Bush, op. cit., p. 148; Bush, George W, National Day of Prayer and Remembrance Service, September 14, 2001,

<[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>59</sup>Bird, Tim and Alex Marshall. 2011. *Afghanistan: how the west lost its way*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 55.

<sup>60</sup>Woodward, op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>62</sup>Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>63</sup>Woodward, op. cit., pp. 96, 145, 150.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 145.

been telling him that soon the American people would ask: 'What are you doing? Where's your leadership? Where is the United States? You're all-powerful, do something.'<sup>65</sup>

Bush was seemingly further forced into doing 'something' by his job approval rating, which jumped from 55 percent before 9/11 to 91 percent.<sup>66</sup> Bush was made aware by the White House Chief of Staff Karl Rove, Rumsfeld, and the Head of Fox News, Roger Ailes, that if history was the guide, including his own father's polling after the Gulf War, his polling support would not remain for long if the public did not see Bush act decisively and at the earliest opportunity.<sup>67</sup> Rumsfeld was aware of the essence of time, as, after the massacre of Americans in Beirut, American support for action against terrorists quickly waned.<sup>68</sup> Bush was also aware that when the approval rating dissipated with the general public, Congress would follow suit.

But in the first days of 9/11, Congress showed its extraordinary support. Bush's Congress Speech of September 20, 2001 was received extremely well. The members of the Joint Houses stood and clapped almost after every sentence Bush uttered. A few days before the speech, Congress had passed a unanimous war resolution, authorising, in effect, all three Bush Doctrines and his declaration of war.<sup>69</sup> Congress certainly demonstrated the national mood. Ordinary Americans suddenly found their president as their saviour and hero. The abovementioned speech by Bush was watched by eighty million Americans. Sports matches were stopped in order to hear what the commander-in-chief had to say. The overwhelming support from Congress and the general public made Bush even more buoyed up, vowing to himself that from 9/11 onwards his focus would be on protecting America from terrorism and, most importantly, *rooting out terror worldwide* no matter how long it took (though Bush and his policymakers wanted to act soon before Bush's approval rating was dissipated). He vowed he would change the direction of history and become a 'transformational' president.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 168.

<sup>66</sup>'Post-ABC poll: terrorist Attacks', September 13, 2001, <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/polls/vault/stories/data091401.htm>> ,also <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/polls/vault/vault.htm>>

<sup>67</sup> Woodward, op. cit., p. 207.

<sup>68</sup>Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 343.

<sup>69</sup>Tanner, op.cit., p. 29; U.S. Congress, a Joint Resolution, Authorization for Use of Military Force, One Hundred Seventh Congress, First Session, September 14, 2001, <<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-107sjres23cps/pdf/BILLS-107sjres23cps.pdf>>

<sup>70</sup>Nye, op. cit.

In summary, a mixture of public-media-Congress pressure increasingly forced Bush to deliver justice, and to do so as soon as possible. The overwhelming public-media-Congress support, seen partly in Bush's high approval rating, was an important variable in building up confidence levels among the policymakers, Bush in particular, to launch such a broad war on terrorism.

**3.1.5 'Mr. President, Mr. President, the White House is under attack! Let's go!'** A secret serviceman, heavily breathing, tells Bush to leave immediately and head towards the underground shelter. It was midnight and the President and the First Lady were asleep.<sup>71</sup>

Bush and Cheney claimed that on September 12 they saw a different America, where commercial aircraft were grounded, the New York Stock Exchange was closed, the Twin Towers had disappeared, tourism and insurance industries were all badly hit, and armed vehicles patrolled the streets of the 'wartime capital', Washington.<sup>72</sup> Bush was informed that many families from cities had escaped to the countryside in case the skyscrapers they lived in were the next targets, and similarly those who worked in them had feared to go to work in case the buildings were targetted by suicide bombers. Families had stocked up on basic necessities in case there were further attacks. As Bush saw it, 'the psyche of the nation had been shaken'.<sup>73</sup>

Such was the psyche of the White House. For the whole day of September 11 Bush was kept away from the White House since there were intelligence reports that more planes were heading to crash into the White House. Bush, however, came back at 6:30 p.m. against the advice given by the CIA, but was abruptly awakened at midnight by a secret service agent and ushered into the bunker underneath the White House, together with his wife and their two dogs. They did not even have the time to change and Mrs Bush had to be guided by her husband since she did not have the time to put on her contact lenses. As Bush put it, they 'must have made quite a sight'.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, the most powerful man on the planet had to hide in the bunker in such a humiliating fashion only to find out minutes later that the plane was one of their own. Bush was not alone in going through personal fear and humiliation. Rice was not able to go to her apartment because of the threat. For the first few nights after 9/11 she stayed at the White House.<sup>75</sup> On the morning of 9/11, Cheney, too, was rushed

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<sup>71</sup>Bush, op. cit., p. 139.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 134; Cheney, op. cit., pp. 329-330, 339.

<sup>73</sup>Bush, op. cit., p. 139.

<sup>74</sup> Bush, op. cit., p. 139.

<sup>75</sup> Rice, op. cit.

through by secret agents to the basement because an inbound, unidentified plane was heading for the White House. The plane then hit the Pentagon. Soon Cheney left for an unidentified and secure location. It was the first of many more times that he was evacuated to unidentified locations just to make sure the next terrorist attacks did not get both him and the President, as it would have decapitated the government.<sup>76</sup> Bush and his Cabinet could not go through such fear forever; in their view, they had to do something.

They had to do something, as Rumsfeld, Tenet, and according to Bush, Cheney in *particular* were fearful of further attacks, especially those involving some form of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons.<sup>77</sup> They were suddenly fearful because, after the 9/11 terrorist acts, their assumptions about US security and the capability of AQ were fundamentally changed once AQ demonstrated that they could deliver such a *hard* blow to the heart of America's economic and military power.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, relying on intelligence sources, Tenet told the War Cabinet that certain Pakistani scientists had provided AQ, which had been acquiring chemical, biological and radiological nuclear weapons since 1993, with information on how to make nuclear weapons. To make matters worse, some of Russia's nuclear materials had been smuggled, and Russian President Putin could only account for materials on his watch as President. Had these materials found their way into the hands of AQ? The CIA did not know. In short, Tenet could not reassure them a hundred percent that AQ did not possess WMD, was not developing them, and had not smuggled some into the US.<sup>79</sup> Cheney's reply was that if the policymakers had even a one percent doubt about it, they should treat it as if AQ had nuclear weapons, as the conventional risk assessment did not apply when it came to WMD in the hands of terrorists, who would not hesitate to utilise them against the US.<sup>80</sup> The Soviets, just like the US, wanted to live and use the nuclear weapons as a deterrent, but AQ would embrace the moment when the US feared death. An AQ equipped with some forms of WMD, thought the policymakers, would change history since it would turn AQ into a superpower and bring death into every American household

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<sup>76</sup>Cheney, op. cit., pp. 1, 10, 337.

<sup>77</sup>Leffler, op. cit.; Gordon, op. cit.; Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 355-356; Cheney, op. cit., pp. 10, 218, 318; Woodward( 2002); op. cit., pp. 160, 218; Tenet, op.cit., pp. 393-396; Bush, op. cit., p.189; Gates, Robert Michael. 2014. *Duty: memoirs of a Secretary at war*, p. 93.

<sup>78</sup>Cheney, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>79</sup>Tenet, op. cit., pp. 261, 393-96, 399, 402, 408, 412-414.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., pp. 402-404.



and drastically alter the free nature of US society.<sup>81</sup> In such a scenario neither the FBI nor the Defense Department nor the CIA could help.

The threat of WMD was not the only idea within the advisors' minds, however, as Bush received CIA intelligence in his morning briefings that warned him about other threats, at times a hundred of them, some *imminent*, to US facilities around the world and targets inside the country.<sup>82</sup> For example, on Saturday, September 22, the FBI told Bush they had 331 people on their watch list, some of whom were assumed to be capable of carrying out another 9/11 attack. 'It floored', Bush talked of his reaction to the dreadful news to Woodward in a later interview.<sup>83</sup> Being disturbed by this 'incredible number', Bush asked Tenet to make a list of targets AQ was most likely to hit within the US, but Tenet replied that there were simply too many targets in the US to protect. Rumsfeld's Beirut experience taught him that it was physically impossible for the US to protect its every corner day and night. For him, the terrorist had to be lucky once to carry out a terrorist attack, but the US always to prevent terrorist attacks.<sup>84</sup> However, the principals did everything at home to defend America and its way of life, including holding NSC deputies meetings to focus on threats to homeland security; shifting priority from bringing those responsible to justice to *preventing* further attacks; heightening security at home (especially airports and ports); and giving unprecedented powers to the security services including the CIA, the FBI and other relevant departments.<sup>85</sup> But whatever they did internally, the grim reality remained unchanged: the US homeland was still open and vulnerable since AQ was freely operating in Afghanistan, representing a major strategic danger to the US<sup>86</sup> – and its liberal nature.

America's good life – the financial conditions, the chance to better oneself, individual freedom, public safety and many other values – was the result of the liberal and democratic

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., pp. 425-427; Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 355-56; Bush, George W, Address to the United Nations General Assembly, November 10, 2001,

<[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>; George W, Address at the Citadel, December 11, 2001,

<[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>82</sup>Bush, op. cit., p. 164; Woodward (2002), op. cit., pp. 105-106.

<sup>83</sup>Woodward, op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>84</sup>Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>85</sup>Bush, op. cit., p. 43; Bush, op. cit., p. 151; Bush, George W, State of the Union Address to the 107th Congress, January 29, 2002,

<[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>86</sup>Rice, op. cit., pp. 80, 88; Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 355-356.

nature of America. America is not 'so much a land and a people as it is a way of life that embodies an idea – the idea of individual freedom'.<sup>87</sup> The terrorists were threatening the very liberal nature of America.<sup>88</sup> So the US had a choice: either to change the free nature of its society by taking more severe measures, or to change the way terrorists lived by going after the places where they grew. The US opted for the latter option; it was terrorism which had created the situation and 'the only way to defeat terrorism as a threat to our way of life is to stop it, eliminate it, and destroy it where it grows'.<sup>89</sup> Defeating and destroying terrorism meant closing their safe haven in Afghanistan before AQ developed other plans.<sup>90</sup> Destroying AQ and TB in Afghanistan would reduce the level of threat, but it would not entirely eliminate the threat of further attacks, since AQ could shift to other countries such as Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia and many other countries with safe havens. Furthermore, the issue of WMD by rogue states would have been left untouched.<sup>91</sup> Thus a global campaign was argued for by the Defense Department and approved by Bush.<sup>92</sup>

This subsection tries to bring to attention the circumstances and the *milieu* in which the policymakers made the decision for the GWOT, a period when the possibility of another wave of attacks, especially attacks involving some form of WMD, was *real* and *imminent* in *their* minds.<sup>93</sup> Christopher Meyer, the British Ambassador to Washington, declared: 'Unless you were living in America at the time it is not easy to imagine the impact on Bush himself. He was responsible for the security of nearly 300 million American lives. The fear of further atrocity was overwhelming.'<sup>94</sup> Bush (and his advisors) thought that another wave of strikes on America would have brought America to a halt, both economically and security-wise, and his administration to an immature political death. After all, it was bad enough that 9/11 happened under his presidency. Another one and his character would have come across as too incompetent to protect America.<sup>95</sup> For many weeks after 9/11, according to Laura Bush

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<sup>87</sup>Feith, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., pp. 69-71; Leffler, op. cit.

<sup>89</sup>Bush (2001). Address to a Joint Session of Congress, op. cit.

<sup>90</sup>Gordon, op. cit.

<sup>91</sup>Marshall, Joshua Micah, 'Remaking the World: Bush and the Neoconservatives', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2003, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/59380/joshua-micah-marshall/remaking-the-world-bush-and-the-neoconservatives>>

<sup>92</sup>Byman, Daniel, 'Should Hezbollah Be Next?', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2003, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/59366/daniel-byman/should-hezbollah-be-next>>; Gordon, op. cit.; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 56; Cheney, op. cit., p. 218; Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 355-56.

<sup>93</sup>Gates, op. cit., p. 93; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 55; Leffler, op. cit.; Gordon, op. cit.

<sup>94</sup>Meyer is quoted in Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>95</sup>Cheney, op. cit., pp. 330, 339; Woodward (2002), op. cit., p. 171.

in an interview with Woodward, Bush had troubling and sleepless nights.<sup>96</sup> Tenet equally spent sleepless nights shaken by how this could have happened under his leadership at the CIA, and another attack would have further damaged the CIA's standing. Thus Bush and his principals, feeling *guilty* about 9/11 taking place on their watch, were under *tremendous* pressure to *defuse the threat*, especially the threat of *WMD*, as *soon* as possible and get the country *and* the administration back to normal in the short term.<sup>97</sup> The purpose of terrorists was to terrorise the US to alter its behaviour and its values, and to try to make the US live in fear. But for the administration it was important to keep and *defend* Americans and all those values that were dear to them, and to turn around the trend by forcing the terrorists to live in fear.

### 3.2. THE 'HOW' QUESTION

The NSC held a number of meetings between September 11 to the day the US invaded Afghanistan on October 7, 2001. However, it was the period between September 11 and September 15 in which the Bush Administration made the strategy for the GWOT, *especially* in the meeting held at Camp David on Saturday, September 15. In the first (the second if the afternoon meeting is counted) NSC meeting in the evening of 9/11 in the Bunker of the White House, the President, who seemed in charge, determined and direct, repeated his declaration of war and the three doctrines, making it clear that countries needed to choose between the US and the terrorists.<sup>98</sup> After linking AQ to the 9/11 atrocities, the principals declared the US at war with AQ based mainly in Afghanistan. In relation to Afghanistan (and Pakistan), Bush's three doctrines were going to be automatically applicable, that is, if TB refused US proposals and continued to 'harbour' the perpetrators, AQ, TB would blur the distinction, and the US urgently needed for its self-defence to take the war overseas in Afghanistan where AQ was based to defeat it (and its harbourers) *before* the latter attacked America again.<sup>99</sup> Bush stated that it was important to dismantle the AQ sanctuary in Afghanistan. Tenet said that AQ had connections to about 60 countries. Bush's reply was simple and decisive: 'Let's pick them off one at a time'.<sup>100</sup> It was clear that the principals

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<sup>96</sup>Woodward, op. cit., pp. 171.

<sup>97</sup>Tenet, op. cit., p. 26; Leffler, op. cit.

<sup>98</sup>Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 346; Tenet, op. cit., p. 261; Woodward (2002), op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>99</sup>Gordon, op. cit.; Tenet, op. cit., pp. 262-263; Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 346; Woodward, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>100</sup>Woodward, op. cit.

were not debating the wisdom of the three doctrines. It was also clear that they were not debating *whether* to go to war against global terrorism, as it had already been decided by Bush minutes after the second plane hit the second tower, but rather that the debate was shifting towards *how* to go to war and *how broad* the enemy – terrorism – was. This was the case throughout policymaking. While the evening NSC meeting of September 11 was important in terms of showing that all the Bush Doctrines were already made up and the advisors did not hold them up to scrutiny, the Camp David meeting was vital because it discussed, in addition to designing a war plan, how broad the enemy was, whether to include Iraq in the first wave, whether to act unilaterally or multilaterally, the ‘Pakistan problem’, and whether to include the Northern Alliance (NA) as part of the war plan. A couple of days before, Bush had told everyone to bring their policy ideas to the Camp David meeting for discussion. It was the following Monday that Bush announced his decision. This long, rich-in-detail and result-producing meeting, therefore, is the focus of this section in order to discover answers to the ‘how’ question, as well as touch upon some bureaucratic tensions.

When it came to a strategy in relation to Afghanistan, the CIA had an upper hand compared to the Defense Department, because the CIA had contact with numerous parties involved in Afghanistan, the NA included, since the Soviet invasion. In the last few years up to 9/11, CIA teams had been deployed five times to the Panjshir Valley, the stronghold of the NA, to bolster the NA’s capability. Additionally, by 10 September 2001, the CIA had hundreds of sources, subsources, and relationships with eight different tribes all around Afghanistan.<sup>101</sup> Due to its extensive contacts, the CIA had managed to prepare a plan entitled ‘Blue Sky’ to weaken AQ in Afghanistan well before Bush came into power, but, due to the Clinton Administration’s concerns for Pakistan’s internal instability, the command and control of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons, the possibility of a nuclear war between India and Pakistan, and the Bush Administration’s lack of interest in confronting AQ prior to 9/11, the Clinton and Bush Administrations had not shown much commitment. Now Bush wanted the CIA to present its plan, and so at Camp David, on September 15, the CIA’s refined plan was entitled ‘Destroying International Terrorism’, and the ‘Initial Hook’ being the destruction of AQ and the ‘Closing [of] the Safe Haven’ in Afghanistan.<sup>102</sup> The CIA plan required the

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<sup>101</sup>Tenet, op. cit., p. 315.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., pp. 213, 261, 268-271; Woodward, op. cit., pp. 48, 76-77.

deployment of CIA operatives inside Afghanistan to immediately assist and work with the NA and other opposition groups (including some six TB commanders) against AQ and TB and provide a way for the introduction of US Special Forces. CIA operatives and Special Forces would then provide 'an eye on the ground' for US military bombing. Due to the CIA's years of preparation, the mission could start immediately, and AQ and TB would be defeated in a 'matter of weeks'. The plan also required the US to engage Afghanistan's neighbours, namely, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, to stop all border crossings. To acquire Pakistan's and 'stans' states' cooperation, Tenet said, everyone's help was appreciated to speak to their counterparts, including the President who was to speak to the Russian President who had influence in the 'stans' states. The CIA's covert work further pleased Bush when Tenet informed the latter that CIA drones had been operating out of Uzbekistan for a year on surveillance missions to provide real-time videos of Afghanistan. They could always be equipped with Hellfire missiles.<sup>103</sup> Woodward claims that after days of rhetoric by the President to bring the perpetrators of 9/11 to justice, Bush was presented with a real and quickly implemented strategy to take justice to them – a strategy which was quite impactful on the President<sup>104</sup> because the offensive plan was capable of going after the AQ leadership, shutting their safe haven in Afghanistan, and eventually pursuing them in ninety-two countries around the world.<sup>105</sup>

Tenet did not have to worry about the Pakistan problem either, as it had already declared its support of a possible US campaign in Afghanistan. Pakistan, one of the very few countries that had recognised the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan under TB, was a strong supporter of the TB regime and had tremendous influence with TB. While both Powell and Tenet stressed the importance of Pakistan in relation to any strategy being made towards Afghanistan, they initially had been of the opinion that convincing Pakistan to give up TB and be on the US's side was not straightforward because relations with Pakistan were not cordial due to US sanctions on Pakistan following the latter's nuclear tests in the 1990s, the Bush Senior Administration's decision to abandon the region (and its only regional ally, Pakistan) following the Soviet disintegration, and the distrust of Pakistani officials towards

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid., pp. 269-272; Woodward, op. cit., pp. 51, 76-77.

<sup>104</sup>Woodward, op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>105</sup>Tenet, op. cit., pp. 273-274; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., pp. 66-67; Gordon, op. cit.

US motives.<sup>106</sup> Any US policy towards Afghanistan was not going to be greeted with open arms but with a suspicious eye by the Pakistani officials. Nevertheless, Bush ordered the State Department in the evening NSC meeting of September 11 to talk with the Pakistani leader General Musharraf whether he was with the US or the terrorists. To the pleasant surprise of Powell and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, Pakistan accepted all State Department demands made a day after 9/11. The demands were as follows: to stop AQ members crossing the border into Pakistan; to end logistical support to AQ; to grant overflights and landing rights and access to Pakistan's naval and air bases, as well as borders; to provide the US with immediate intelligence and immigration information; to condemn the 9/11 attacks and curb internal support for them; to stop immediately shipments of fuels to TB and to stop Pakistani fighters joining TB; and for Pakistan to break off all diplomatic relationships with the TB regime.<sup>107</sup> To put it simply, Powell had asked Pakistan to help destroy the TB regime that it, especially its intelligence service, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), had worked for years to create. Bush thought highly of the State Department's work in relation to Pakistan.

Bush was then completely engaged and was going hundred miles per hour, and if a member of his Cabinet could not keep up, he was not interested in that member. The Pentagon, as Tenet claims, seems to have been one of the slow riders, as the President was disappointed when he learned that the Pentagon had no contingency plan for Afghanistan,<sup>108</sup> and Henry H. Shelton's war options were simple and not interesting. The options were as follows: the Clinton option of using cruise missile strikes against AQ camps in Afghanistan; combined missile attacks with manned bomber attacks; or missiles and manned bombers with boots on the ground. While the first two options did not require, the last option required time to be executed because the Defense Department needed bases and overflight rights, and, once they were acquired, time to deploy Search and Rescue Teams and Special Forces; not to mention the time needed to develop diplomacy with the 'stans' states.<sup>109</sup> Bush, Cheney and even Rumsfeld were unimpressed, describing the options

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<sup>106</sup>Bearden, Milton, 'Afghanistan, Graveyard of Empires', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2001, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/57411/milton-bearden/afghanistan-graveyard-of-empires>>; Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 397; Woodward, op. cit., p. 59; Tenet, op.cit., pp. 212, 262-263.

<sup>107</sup>Jones, Seth G. 2009. *In the graveyard of empires: America's war in Afghanistan*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co, pp. 88-89; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>108</sup>Tenet, op. cit., p. 270.

<sup>109</sup>Bush, op. cit., pp. 188-189; Woodward, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

privately as 'unimaginative' and 'unoriginal'.<sup>110</sup> Bush was not interested in the first two options, as he was not going to 'pound sand' like the Clinton Administration. Bush chose the third option and wanted military forces to be on the ground *as soon as* an effective response could be prepared by the Defense Department. Shelton wanted months, but Rumsfeld reassured Bush that the Pentagon would work around the clock to develop an appropriate plan, and develop it soon, before there was another attack on the US homeland.<sup>111</sup>

The Defense Department would work hard to alter Shelton's unimaginative military options, but the advisors could do nothing to alter Afghanistan's forbidding geography and history of 'empire killer', something that 'nagged at the President's advisors'.<sup>112</sup> Bush wanted to know the worst that could happen. The reply was that, firstly, the situation could get really chaotic in Afghanistan and spread to Pakistan, unleashing a whole set of 'demons'. Pakistan's choice, said Cheney, of being a partner with the US could lead the extremists to try to bring down Musharraf's Government and get access to its nuclear weapons. Bush saw this as a 'nightmare scenario', announcing quick medicine for it: the US needed to provide Pakistan with financial and humanitarian assistance because Musharraf was truly taking a tremendous risk.<sup>113</sup>

Another risk was that the US could become bogged down in Afghanistan. The risk was based on the nemesis of the British in the 19th century and the Soviets a century later. But the fact that the US was playing a *supportive* role in Afghanistan, thanks to the Blue Sky plan by the CIA, seemed to have decreased the level of concern among the principals. The strategy had the effect of killing two birds with one stone: it presented the President with the option not to fight the same unsuccessful war the Russians had done, as the plan did not ask for a traditional army but a few CIA paramilitary teams with some Special Forces that would help the Afghans, mainly the NA, to defeat AQ. It was an Afghan war fought by the Afghans, and the US would be by their side to support them to liberate themselves from TB and AQ.<sup>114</sup> Bush, Cheney and Rumsfeld did not see the NA's weaknesses, including accusations of serious abuses of human rights during the four years of the civil war in Kabul,

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<sup>110</sup> Cheney, op. cit., p. 332; Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 359; Woodward, op. cit., p. 84.

<sup>111</sup> Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 359.

<sup>112</sup> Lyon, op. cit., pp. xxxv, xI; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 11; Rice, op. cit., p. 88; Woodward, op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>113</sup> Bush, op. cit., p. 189; Woodward, op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>114</sup> O' Hanlon (2002), op. cit.; Bush, op. cit., p. 187; Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 371-377, 683; Cheney, op. cit., p. 347; Woodward, op. cit., p. 53.

and the NA being on the payroll of Iran and Russia, as obstacles because they had to defeat an enemy who was planning to launch further attacks. They were at war, and consequently warfare posed 'excruciating moral trade-offs'. Given the circumstances, the US was prepared to use every means to defend its freedom and security, and as such it was willing to ally with 'less than savoury characters', those whom the US in ordinary circumstances would have not accepted as its allies.<sup>115</sup>

As it became apparent in later NSC meetings, however, the CIA did not seem to be unanimous on the NA. The National Counterterrorism Center was in favour of immediate and substantial aid to the NA to defeat TB, whereas the CIA operatives from Islamabad thought that allying with the NA meant allying with Russia, India and Iran. These countries, especially India, were Pakistan's mortal enemies and they had nurtured the NA to reduce Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan.<sup>116</sup> If the US assisted the NA, it would anger Pakistani officials as well as the Pashtuns from the south and hence create a civil war. Therefore, some CIA operatives from Pakistan suggested a continuing role for the TB in post-war Afghanistan. The Defense leadership, particularly Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, whenever this concern was raised by the CIA, would fight against it. Rumsfeld was worried that this view by the intelligence officials from Pakistan seemed coloured by Pakistani interests, which were not necessarily identical to US ones. Rumsfeld believed that there were ways to avoid the civil war, but they could not afford to lose some 20,000 seasoned fighters of the NA, the only advantage in an otherwise challenging fight in Afghanistan. The risk of the Pashtuns was manageable, in Rumsfeld's opinion, as they could reach those Pashtuns in the south who were against TB.<sup>117</sup> In Cheney's view, the entire argument of siding with the NA would alienate Pakistan and was 'misguided'.<sup>118</sup> Thus it was becoming clear that the NA was becoming a core part of US strategy in the GWOT on the Afghan stage.

It is important to mention at this point that the inclusion of the NA also played an important role in public diplomacy, or to put it simply, the propaganda aspect of the strategy for Afghanistan as well as the GWOT. This aspect of the strategy again was proposed by the CIA. In a later NSC meeting, held on Sunday, September 23, chaired by Rice without the President, Tenet recommended that the Afghan war be cast not as Westerners

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<sup>115</sup> Cheney, op. cit., pp. 35, 343; Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 372; Bush, op. cit., p. 187; Woodward, op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>116</sup> Bearden (2001), op. cit.; Tenet, op. cit., pp. 213-214.

<sup>117</sup> Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 371, 376.

<sup>118</sup> Cheney, op. cit., p. 340.



against Afghans, or Westerners against Islam, but as Afghans against foreigners, the Arabs, who had returned to Afghanistan and established bases. Efforts should be made to make it clear to the Afghans that the US was not in Afghanistan to establish bases there, and it was important to push the Afghan tribes to fight. The CIA experts had been aware of the ten years of failed Soviet attempts, so the general rule was to study what the Soviets had done and do the opposite. Bush later approved Tenet's recommendation and the war was cast as Afghans (with the support of America) against foreigners, the Arabs, who used Afghanistan as a terrorist base.<sup>119</sup> It is equally vital to mention that Tenet proposed a political plan for Afghanistan in the same NSC meeting of September 23, and Bush later approved it by giving the task to the State Department to execute it, which it did, resulting in the Bonn Conference that chose Hamid Karzai. The plan asked for bringing in the former Afghan King, Zahir Shah, in the process, as it would strengthen their campaign and provide for a future political process.<sup>120</sup>

The risk of America being bogged down in Afghanistan, however, facilitated the discussion for the Defense Department in the Camp David meeting to argue its famous 'Iraq argument': in case the US was bogged down in Afghanistan, should they go for other terrorist-sponsored states, such as Iraq, which were more achievable.<sup>121</sup> This way, success was more possible and it would maintain national and international support. Moreover, Afghanistan did not have many valuable targets, whereas Iraq had the kind of targets upon which the US could inflict the costly damage that would cause other terrorist-supporting nations to change their behaviour. The Iraq inclusion would have put the Defense Department in the centre of policymaking, as, previous to the 9/11 attacks, the Pentagon had been working for months on developing a plan for Iraq (as the CIA had been doing for Afghanistan), which the administration believed to have been bent on 'acquiring and using [WMD]' on America. Every one of the NSC advisors knew the enemy was terrorism and states that harboured terrorism, but the question for the Defense Department was which states to include, and, most importantly, how to define terrorism. Rumsfeld, Feith and Wolfowitz, Cheney, and, according to Feith, Rice believed terrorism was not just AQ and its operatives in Afghanistan, nor could terrorism be defeated if the US eliminated OBL and

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<sup>119</sup>Woodward, op. cit., pp. 115, 122, 128; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 92.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., pp. 122, 128.

<sup>121</sup>Rice, op. cit., p. 86; Jones (2009), op. cit., p. 126.

shut his safe haven in Afghanistan, as his men would shift to other countries. Thus the enemy in the eyes of Cheney, Rice, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and Feith was worldwide, compromising of both terrorists, especially AQ and Islamist jihadists, and other groups and states that supported them to inflict serious harm against US interests – including those rogue states that were involved one way or another in the proliferation of WMD, such as Libya, Iraq and Iran. Striking a blow against terrorism meant striking a blow against those countries that sponsored terrorism. Iraq was one of them. Rumsfeld, like Wolfowitz, was specifically in favour of including Iraq with Afghanistan in the first stage of the campaign.<sup>122</sup> At Camp David, however, Rumsfeld himself did not ask for the inclusion of Iraq, but his influential deputy, Wolfowitz, did. His request was so persistent and distracting that Bush had to quieten him, adding that Bush only wanted to hear the principals' views, not their deputies.<sup>123</sup> Bush said to his advisors that there was enough discussion on Iraq in the morning session, so in the afternoon session he wanted to hear views of his principals on Afghanistan only.

In the afternoon session, Powell advised that OBL and AQ should be the first target. An ultimatum should be issued, giving TB forty-eight hours to hand over AQ leadership or else they would share AQ's fate. Bush should avoid going after Iraq because America would lose the coalition they had signed up, the support at home and the support of the UN and some NATO countries. If they found the linkage to 9/11, then they could aim at Iraq, too, maybe Syria and Iran. But Powell, unlike Wolfowitz, doubted that such a linkage existed. But for the time being, Powell advised, they should set aside the option of Iraq; maybe later once the US was successful in Afghanistan. Powell, once a military man himself, doubted the ability of US Central Command (USCENTCOM) to engage in two or more fronts at the same time. Finally, he suggested the US present to the world evidence of AQ being behind 9/11 to make a concrete case for war in Afghanistan. Powell was of the opinion that the goal from the outset should not be to change the regime but to get them to do the right things. Powell clearly wanted TB to break away from AQ as he did not see TB as a serious problem.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Feith, op. cit., pp. 4, 15, 18-21, 66-67; Cheney, op. cit., p. 332; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., pp. 57-58, 65; Woodward, op. cit., pp. 48-49, 83, 88; Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 346; Leffler, op. cit.; Rice, op. cit., p. 86; Bush, op. cit., p. 189.

<sup>123</sup> Rice, op. cit., p. 86; Woodward, op. cit., p. 85; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 65.

<sup>124</sup> Jones (2009), op. cit., p. 126; Woodward, op. cit., pp. 87-88, 122-124; Bush, op. cit., p. 189; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 65.

Rumsfeld opposed giving evidence to the world since the precedent would not be helpful to pre-emptive actions in the future against a threat to the US; in the future they might not have enough information to make the case for an action. He also recommended that the CIA should not give all importance to OBL, as the war would start with the aim of destroying him and his network, but would not end after defeating AQ; mentioning OBL a lot would risk elevating him and narrowing the base support for the anti-terrorist campaign. Rumsfeld was of the opinion that TB should not stay in power in any case, even if they accepted US conditions, since the US would risk sending a message to other nations that they could support terrorist groups and then negotiate a 'grand bargain' with the US. Rumsfeld was not bothered by the fear of losing the coalition: as the mission was to determine the coalition, the coalition ought not to determine the mission. Rumsfeld recommended to Bush that they needed first to define their mission, and then choose which partner suited it best. Any country with conditions unacceptable to the US was not welcomed, and any argument that the coalition would not tolerate this or that argued for a different coalition. Rumsfeld advised against a large coalition to be tied to every activity or operation as the operation would not benefit being tied to a large coalition since many countries might have different views and internal and external concerns. As a former US Ambassador to NATO, Rumsfeld did not like the 'tedious, laborious consultative process by which America and its European allies reached their decisions'.<sup>125</sup> Bush, on the other hand, seemed to have been bothered by Powell using the coalition as a justification for the US not doing this or that. He did not want the coalition to be used as a reason for his advisors to abstain from certain actions, and he certainly did not want the coalition argument to dictate terms, adding, 'we may be the only one left. That's ok with me. We are America.'<sup>126</sup> Cheney, who agreed with Rumsfeld on the issue of coalition, made it clear as well that, if need be, America alone would shoulder the GWOT.<sup>127</sup> It seemed that Bush, Cheney and Rumsfeld believed that America's powers would enable it to shoulder the responsibility alone. For Powell, nevertheless, the coalition was important and he persistently, and regardless of

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<sup>125</sup>Mann, Jim. 2004. *Rise of the Vulcans: the history of the Bush's war cabinet*. New York: Viking, pp. 54, 363; Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 354-355, 368; Woodward, op. cit., pp. 88, 105, 176.

<sup>126</sup>Woodward, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid.; Cheney, op. cit., p. 231.

what Bush and Rumsfeld thought, warned that many countries, especially Muslim, would refuse to be part of the coalition if the option of Iraq was brought on the table.<sup>128</sup>

It is clear from Powell's argument that the State Department advocated a traditional law enforcement approach to punish *only* those who had harmed the US, but the Defense leadership was going for a wider campaign: that is, to disrupt and destroy *all* those who might be planning the next attacks. The State Department did *not* get the simple fact that it was not AQ that constituted the enemy, but an ideology, argued Feith. Radical Islam or 'Islamic extremism' must be confronted in its entirety. A strategic response would include all Islamic terrorist groups – from AQ to Jemaah Islamiyah in South-East Asia to Lebanese Hezbollah and many others – and states sponsoring terrorists – from Afghanistan to Iraq and many others. It was not important whether a state or organisation had a link to the 9/11 attacks, as the US objective was not to punish terrorists but to *prevent* further attacks in (pre-emptive) self-defence of the US. A 'network of states, non-states entities, and organisations' involved in supporting these terrorists *jointly* constituted a severe threat of further attacks to the US. To defeat such a broad enemy in almost every continent, maintained Feith, the GWOT needed to be long and sustained; Rumsfeld at Camp David explicitly talked about the importance of sustaining the war which would take years rather than months.<sup>129</sup> Powell, however, disagreed with the international characterisation of the enemy as well as the inclusion of Iraq, arguing that Americans wanted them to combat AQ and that was what they needed to focus on. For Powell, it was easier to rally the world against a *specific* enemy, AQ, as it was easy to pass a UN resolution, as well as gather a large number of coalitions.<sup>130</sup>

Tenet was in favour of a GWOT but he, nevertheless, recommended starting only with Afghanistan. Bush said that Tenet advised him that hitting Iraq was a 'mistake'.<sup>131</sup> Andrew Card in his turn agreed to go for AQ as it was the enemy. 'An enemy', Bush corrected him.<sup>132</sup> Cheney supported the broader campaign, as this was not a war against certain individuals or cells responsible for 9/11, but rather a global war where the US wanted to go after the networks, organisations and states that supported and aided terrorists. He, however,

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<sup>128</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>129</sup>Feith, op. cit., pp. 49-51, 59; Woodward, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>130</sup>Woodward (2002), op. cit., pp. 48-49.

<sup>131</sup>Bush, op. cit., p. 189.

<sup>132</sup>Woodward (2002), op. cit., p. 90.

stressed that the priority should be to *prevent* the next attack, especially one involving WMD, and therefore it was important that the US did everything to prevent terrorists from accessing WMD, including the adoption and implementation of internal security measures. Cheney added that Afghanistan should be the first to be dealt with, because it was the place where the terrorists had plotted the 9/11 attacks and might plan the next attack. Iraq, he advised Bush, did pose a threat but it should be *postponed* until they had an effective plan to combat the threat posed by TB and AQ in Afghanistan. Cheney, like Powell, was also in favour of striking at AQ and persuading TB to displace their leader, Mullah Omer, who had betrayed them by inviting in the outsiders.<sup>133</sup> Tenet, on the other hand, told them it was difficult to distinguish between the two, as, according to his intelligence, all the targets were intermixed.<sup>134</sup>

So everyone voiced their opinion to Bush, excluding Rice. She had been told by Bush only to listen and voice her opinion later. According to James Pfiffner, Rice played the role of 'honest broker' by ensuring all the views reached the President in an orderly process.<sup>135</sup> Rice, however, was of the same view as Cheney, Powell, Tenet and Card in opposing action in Iraq.<sup>136</sup> Bush was yet to make a decision by the coming Monday as to which camp he would go with.

On Monday, September, 17, Bush informed his War Cabinet that over the weekend he had made the decision. The general authority of the decision dealt with two fronts: home and Afghanistan. At home, the CIA, FBI, the Justice Department and other relevant departments were given more authority, including pre-emptive power, to protect America within from further attacks. For Afghanistan, Powell was to issue an ultimatum to TB, something that Bush later included in his Congress Speech.<sup>137</sup> If TB did not comply – a prospect they (correctly)<sup>138</sup> assumed to be more likely – Bush was to use Shelton's third option. Bush said his option was a clear change from the Clinton approach. The Pentagon, meanwhile, should develop a detailed plan to include the new and unconventional targets in

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<sup>133</sup>Cheney, op.cit., pp. 9, 332-334; Bush, op. cit., p. 190; Woodward, op. cit., pp. 91, 122-128.

<sup>134</sup>Woodward (2002), op. cit., pp. 91, 122-128.

<sup>135</sup>Pfiffner, James, 'Policymaking in the Bush White House', *The Brookings Institution*, October, 2008, <<http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2008/10/31-bush-pfiffner>>

<sup>136</sup> Woodward (2002), op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>137</sup> Bush, George W. (2001). Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People. [The White House]. <<http://georgewbushwhite.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>>

<sup>138</sup> Obama, Barack, Address to the Nation on Operations in Afghanistan, October 7, 2001, <[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

Afghanistan, the timing for its execution, which allies to be included (he wanted the British to be given a role) how and when to be included, and how much cost the plan would incur. Bush wanted the plan 'quick', adding that he intended to hit Afghanistan so severely that other terrorist-supporting nations would take notice. While it would take another six days for the Defense Department to produce a plan – named Operation Enduring Freedom with four stages: to merge CIA operatives with Special Forces to clear the way for conventional forces; air campaign; ground forces from the US and coalition partners; and finally to stabilise the country and help Afghans build a free society – and another three weeks, to the frustration of Bush and Rumsfeld, to put it into effect, Bush for Afghanistan authorised the CIA's Blue Sky plan with all its steps. The CIA could operate freely and fully in Afghanistan with its paramilitary teams and operatives, as well as drones. It gave the CIA unprecedented authority to deal with terrorism, including eliminating, imprisoning, and sending terrorists to third countries for interrogation. The second document he signed was military, intelligence, diplomatic and financial actions, and steps the War Cabinet needed to take in order to carry out the GWOT, actions regarding Afghanistan included.<sup>139</sup>

As for Iraq, Bush had allowed the debate on Iraq to take place in the morning session at Camp David so that he learned his advisors' views. But Bush was not in favour of going to Iraq and Afghanistan because he did not want to simultaneously commit America's military forces to two wars. It would have created a lack of focus, which would have been a huge risk. It was true that he was committed to root out terror from the world, but he was to do so *one at a time*. Bush's second worry over Iraq was that most of the NSC advisors – Cheney, Powell and Wolfowitz – were from the Gulf War 1991 and he did not want them to use 9/11 as an excuse 'to settle an old score'. Finally, there was no evidence to link 9/11 with Iraq – though Bush believed Saddam Hussein had been involved. Bush, however, wanted the Pentagon to *continue* to work on a plan for Iraq.<sup>140</sup>

The continuous developing of the Iraq plan for a possible action, as well as Bush's order to the other US departments to take anti-terrorist measures against many terrorist organisations that had no clear link to 9/11, were clear indications that Bush approved the Defense Department's advice to keep the campaign wide and sustained in order to destroy

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<sup>139</sup> Tenet, op. cit., p. 316; Bush, op. cit., p. 194; Cheney, op. cit., p. 337; Woodward (2002), op. cit., pp. 63, 98, 101; Feith, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>140</sup> Woodward (2002), op. cit., pp. 81, 85, 99.

*international terrorism* from the world to *prevent* further attacks on the US, as opposed to punishing the 9/11 perpetrators, AQ and its backers. Bush had only differed with the Pentagon on the timing: the Defense Department wanted at least Iraq, Afghanistan and AQ in the first phase, but Bush decided to destroy one at a time. Ostensibly, one might think that Bush was acting on Powell's advice to focus on a specific enemy, AQ and TB, but in reality he had been strongly influenced by the Defense Department, especially by Cheney. Bush and Cheney do not mention in their memoirs whether they met each other between the Camp David meeting on Saturday, September 15, and the following Monday, a period in which Bush made the decision, but Bush's decision was in line with Cheney's view of Camp David, namely, that the GWOT was international, but for the time being should be limited to AQ and TB in Afghanistan. Cheney tended to tell Bush his ideas privately, especially during their private lunches, so it is not far from reality that Cheney had met Bush between the Camp David meeting and the following Monday to elaborate on his ideas and to ensure Bush followed them. According to Woodward, Bush tended to listen to Cheney's ideas without testing them.<sup>141</sup>

By the NSC meeting on October 6, 2001, the CIA's part of the strategy for Afghanistan was done, as its paramilitary group, the Jawbreaker, had already entered Afghanistan on 27 September with plenty of US dollars. They had since been active. The State Department had worked hard and managed to sign up a strong coalition, Pakistan, Russia and the 'stans' in particular, and had spoken to Zahir Shah, the former Afghan King, about a political process after the TB defeat. Rumsfeld, who had been frustrated with his military leadership for the delay in producing the war plan, also confirmed that its war plan was almost effective. In short, after 26 days, the military, diplomatic, and political (though this aspect was still at its crawling stage due to the lack of attention) aspects of Afghan strategy had almost come to shape, and the secretaries told Bush they were ready. Bush, backed by an angry and united American people, gave the go-ahead for the Operation Enduring Freedom on Sunday, October 7. It was the first step in the GWOT.

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<sup>141</sup>Woodward, Bob. 2010. *Obama's wars*. New York; Simon & Schuster, p. 169.

### 3.3. THE 'WHAT' QUESTION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

After much talk of quagmire and the panic of whether the Afghan strategy was working, Afghanistan was 'liberated' within two months and a few days. Tenet claims that with 110 CIA officers, 316 Special Forces personnel and US air power following the CIA's plan, the CIA won one of the greatest successes in the history of the Agency when they defeated TB and AQ in most of Afghanistan.<sup>142</sup> But Feith gives most, if not all, credit to the Defense Department and hardly mentions the CIA's efforts. According to Feith, it was Rumsfeld that helped the President to develop the strategy for the Afghan campaign. Feith explains the Afghan strategy as follows: remove the TB regime and do not just aim at AQ; involve a small number of US ground forces to avoid the mistakes the Soviet Union had made; support the NA and other anti-Taliban forces in Afghanistan in the Afghan war against foreigners; and give utmost importance to the precision strikes. The goals were to make an example of TB as a state supporting terrorism and to disrupt and defeat a part of the international terrorist network in order to reduce the capability of international terrorists to launch new attacks on the US homeland. It was important for the strategy to deal with TB as soon as possible and with maximum effect to force other terrorist-supporting states to change course.<sup>143</sup> The toppling of TB would also result in the *incidental* objective of the Afghan strategy: the liberation of the Afghans, especially of the oppressed Afghan women, and the establishment of democracy and the spreading of liberal values – though the Defense Department did not seem committed to doing its share. For enhancing these liberal ideas, a political process was needed, but it was not something debated enough in NSC meetings, but rather left to be improvised on the ground.

However, as seen, the CIA war proposal for Afghanistan at Camp David included all the above aspects of the strategy mentioned by Feith. Tenet admits that the CIA was not a policymaker, but a policy implementer. The policymakers, the President in particular, tell the CIA what it is allowed to achieve. But in Afghanistan's case, Tenet argues, the CIA first entered Afghanistan, as it was an intelligence war, and hence the CIA played a prominent role.<sup>144</sup> Moreover, the CIA had extensive contacts in Afghanistan and developed a covert

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<sup>142</sup>Tenet, op. cit., pp. 287-288, 343.

<sup>143</sup>Feith, op. cit., pp. 89, 100, 130-132.

<sup>144</sup>Tenet, op. cit., pp. 218, 316; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 67.



plan years back. The Defense Department lacked both, and was extremely slow in making a military plan from scratch; a plan that dealt with *unconventional* warfare in a primitive, landlocked rugged terrain of Afghanistan where the enemy was guerrilla fighters that lived in caves and rode mules. Feith himself admits that Rumsfeld was sensitive and unhappy with CIA officials making policy arguments. There was a difference between 'describing a situation and prescribing a way to deal with it'.<sup>145</sup> The CIA was 'prescribing a way' when it put forward the Blue Sky plan. The CIA not only made the policy for Afghanistan, but also accelerated the process of decision-making by constantly warning of imminent future attacks if Bush did not act pre-emptively to defuse them.

However, one should never see US intervention in Afghanistan in *isolation*. Afghanistan was *part* of an overall strategy on the GWOT, which was greatly shaped by the Defense Department with the *support* of the Vice-President. However, where Cheney did not agree with Rumsfeld on certain aspects of the strategy, such as the inclusion of Iraq in the first phase of the GWOT or the issue of defeating TB, even if it accepted US conditions, Bush seemed to have listened to Cheney's advice rather than Rumsfeld's. But overall, the Defense leadership greatly influenced the policy. The CIA, for example, believed an attack or attacks like 9/11 would come again from Afghanistan where AQ were freely and actively operating, but the Defense Department argued that further attacks were possible not just from Afghanistan, but from terrorist organisations (namely, Islamic extremists) around the world, as well as rogue states with a history of having supported terrorism or having tried to obtain WMD. Together they all constituted an enemy. It was the Defense Department's civilian leadership that argued that US's chief purpose was not to punish terrorism but to prevent further attacks. To do so, it needed to employ a long and sustained campaign against terrorism and states that sponsored terrorism all around the world. Once they were done in Afghanistan, they argued, they were to strangle other terrorist-supporting states and organisations. That is what they did, as the war plan for Iraq never stopped being made; and as early as the beginning of 2002, US policymakers' focus, especially those from the Defense Department and the White House, shifted towards Iraq. Therefore, Afghanistan was part of the *overall* strategy for the GWOT, which was as follows: warn the government or organisation to give up terrorism; in case of disobedience, deploy a small member of US

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<sup>145</sup>Feith, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

forces; make the maximum effect of US technology (or in two words: 'fight smart'); strangle the regime; and move to the next organisation or state. Using or 'supporting' the population (mainly opposition like the NA) against the regime was an important part of the overall strategy; so was the propaganda of 'liberating' the population. The spreading of democracy, or advancing hope and liberty instead of fear and repression, was its incidental outcome, however. Coalitions were welcomed if they joined on the US's terms, or else it was a US war, and if need be, it could fight it alone. By authorising Tenet's Blue Sky war plan, the GWOT's overall objective emerged as 'destroying international terrorism' with the initial hook being 'destroying' AQ and 'Closing the Safe Haven' in Afghanistan in order to prevent further attacks on the US homeland, as well as safeguarding the American way of life. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US Grand Strategy of 'containment of Soviet expansionism' *seemed* to be replaced by the Grand Strategy of 'destroying international terrorism network', or, in Joseph's words, making terrorism 'obsolete', to defuse the threat against the US (and its allies). Like containment, this new grand strategy would take years rather than months, as the GWOT was a wide and sustained campaign against international terrorism and rogue states that would start in Afghanistan but end once terrorism was defeated/rooted out in its entirety in all four continents, and (rogue) states that supported terrorism or acquired or had WMD either changed their behaviour or faced, in plain language, regime change.<sup>146</sup> The strategy truly was 'revolutionary'.<sup>147</sup>

In summary, while the Defense leadership was mostly responsible for the definition of terrorism (broad as opposed to narrow that included rogue states), the length (long as opposed to short) of the campaign, and the objectives (not to punish, but rather to prevent further attacks by destroying terrorism and its supporters worldwide), and the CIA for the war plan, the decision to launch the GWOT was the decision of Bush himself. It was his gut reaction to the 9/11 terrorist events. At the centre of his decision were his three doctrines

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<sup>146</sup>Ibid., pp. 18, 21, 84; Nye, op. cit.; Leffler, op. cit.; Woodward (2002), op. cit., pp. 48, 73; Tenet, op. cit., p. 275; Bush's speech (2001), Address to a Joint Session of Congress, op. cit.; Bush, George W, National Day of Prayer and Remembrance Service, September 14, 2001,

<[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>;

Bush, George W, Address to the Nation on Operations in Afghanistan, October 7, 2001,

<[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>;

Bush, George W, State of the Union Address to the 107th Congress, January 29, 2002,

<[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>147</sup>Gordon, op. cit.

and his extraordinary invocation of war. They opened up the possibility for many countries and organisations involved in terrorism to be considered as terrorists or supporting terrorists and hence US enemies. It was these doctrines that brought Afghanistan to the forefront of the GWOT: there was no evidence to connect the TB regime to the 9/11 events, yet they were to be targeted because they were *harbouring* AQ and posing further threats; Article 51 of the United Nations Charter only qualifies a country to self-defence and to go to war when there is an imminent attack against the country – in the case of the US, the 9/11 terrorist attacks had *already* taken place. Bush nevertheless believed AQ and TB posed a threat and he took the fight to TB and AQ in Afghanistan in order to confront the threat before it fully materialised (pre-emptive self-defence). To make matters worse, whether the 9/11 attacks constituted an act of war under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter was questionable,<sup>148</sup> yet Bush thought it did and involved the US in what later became known to be its longest war; and, to keep the US further safe, the US advanced the ideas of hope and liberty in Afghanistan, instead of TB's fear and repression.

These doctrines were in turn influenced by Bush, Rumsfeld and Cheney's belief systems that being offensive was the answer to the threat of terrorists. Both Bush and Rumsfeld believed that previous administrations' leniency towards terrorist attacks upon US interests had made terrorists bold, and had showcased America as a paper tiger. The administration needed to act with severity to prove Bush's America was not a paper tiger. The doctrines, and consequently the GWOT, were also influenced by Bush's tendency to make up doctrines based on his gut feeling, rather than having them produced (like President Obama) as a result of an analytical and intellectual decision-making process (elaborated in the next chapter). Bush's strong belief in himself also influenced the resulting policy; he believed he was the man and America the country to defeat evil and spread freedom and democracy, thus creating a world in which he and America would be received in the same way (as hero) as he had been received at Ground Zero.

Domestic influences, mainly the public-media-Congress support (or pressure to do something) equally impacted the decision, forcing Bush to deliver justice as well as give the administration the confidence to define terrorism so widely. This chapter also made attempts to bring to attention the circumstances, the milieu, in which the War Cabinet

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<sup>148</sup> Gray, Christine D. 2008. *International law and the use of force*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.

made the decision of the GWOT. A period when the possibility of another wave of attacks, especially attacks involving WMD, was *real* and *imminent* in the policymakers' minds. The fear had affected the day-to-day lives of both ordinary Americans and the policymakers themselves, and they could not allow it to continue forever. The milieu equally favoured the resulting policy, widening the definition of terrorism in order to defuse further attacks. The policymakers were under the impression that, if they did not defeat terrorism worldwide, and did not do it as soon as possible before it launched more attacks, it would greatly challenge America as a country and its way of life. After all, it was bad enough that 9/11 happened on their watch. Another attack and their administration would have come across as too incompetent to protect America. Thus Bush and his principals were under tremendous pressure to defeat those who caused the threat and get the country back to normal. Thus 'self-defence' or, to be precise, 'pre-emptive self-defence' was the most important factor in US foreign policy after 9/11. It was this pre-emptive self-defence that eventually involved the US in war with Iraq because the latter was believed to have had WMD and could equip terrorists to use them against the US. It was not the liberty agenda that factored into the GWOT. Bush and his advisors were not concerned by democratic or other rights of the Afghans. Afghanistan only became a concern when it had become a haven for AQ. Had TB given up AQ, the US might have not intervened in Afghanistan at all. (These arguments also negate all the other possible motives discussed in the literature review.)

Finally, bureaucratic politics (discussed in more detail in the next chapter) played its part in the resulting policy. Firstly, Rumsfeld's strong personality traits coupled with the support from the Office of the Vice-President derailed the focus of the decision-making process. Instead of analysing in detail all aspects of the policy for Afghanistan, Rumsfeld and his deputy were more concerned about the definition of terrorism; they wanted it broad enough to at least include Iraq – a country the Defense Department had a contingency plan for. But it was not the case in relation to Afghanistan, and therefore the CIA had an upper hand. The strong approval by Cheney and Rumsfeld of the Bush Doctrines equally enabled the doctrines to go unchallenged in the decision-making process. As far as policymaking in regard to Afghanistan was concerned, both the State Department and the CIA produced impressive results: one managed to sign up a broad range of countries in support of the US, including those that had previously supported the TB regime, and the other came up with a

strategy that could be executed within weeks, requiring only a few hundred US forces on the ground and with no substantial financial cost. Nevertheless, since Afghanistan was the first stop of the GWOT, the Defense Department shaped the overall strategy, enabling Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz (and of course Cheney) to gain the upper hand as the GWOT continued being applied in Afghanistan and later in Iraq.

## THE COUNTERTERRORISM DECISION

### INTRODUCTION

*'In 2002 and 2003, U.S. soldiers could not use the word counter-insurgency to describe their efforts...U.S. soldiers were told they were fighting terrorists.'*<sup>1</sup>

*'One of my national security team's last projects [in 2008] was a review of our strategy in Afghanistan. The report called for a more robust counter-insurgency effort, including more troops and civilian resources in Afghanistan.'*<sup>2</sup>

The first quotation shows that the US adopted a counterterrorism strategy (CT-S) in 2002 following the defeat of the Taliban and al Qaeda. However, as the second quotation demonstrates, by 2008 the Bush Administration had tilted towards a counter-insurgency strategy (COIN-S) in accordance with the manual authored by General David Petraeus. Moreover, by 2008 the Bush Administration had abandoned its Grand Strategy of Destroying Terrorism worldwide for a more doable Grand Strategy of containing terrorism. The question is: what caused such a sharp turning point in the Bush Administration Afghan strategy (or, in fact, in the Global War on Terror, which had begun in Afghanistan)? This chapter attempts to provide an answer.

The chapter has six sections. Following Steven L. Lamy's framework for the process of Foreign Policy Decision-Making (FPDM) Approach founded by Snyder and colleagues, section one focuses on the 'formulation phase' of the CT-S in early 2002: that is, how the policy was made – who said *what*, *how* and *why*. Following the 'external and internal' independent variables requirements of the FPDM Approach, section two focuses on how the policymakers' personal traits and bureaucratic positions played a part in the CT-S (and, in fact, in the Global War on Terror strategy, of which the CT-S in question was an extension) towards Afghanistan. Belief systems and images (also encompassing decision-making style)

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<sup>1</sup>Jones, Seth G. 2009. *In the graveyard of empires: America's war in Afghanistan*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup>Bush, George W. 2010. *Decision points*. New York: Crownpublishers, p. 218.

and bureaucratic locations (of Richard Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and, to a lesser extent, the neoconservatives) are causal factors shown to have influenced President Bush to take the decision. Section three deals with the (negative) impact of Bush's operating style upon decision-making. Section four examines the assumptions the CT-S (and the Global War on Terror strategy) were based upon. Section five focuses on the 'implementation phase' of the strategy: what happened after the policy was translated into action at domestic and international levels. It explains that the strategy was based on *false assumptions*, thus failing badly at the implementation phase. Contrary to what Rumsfeld, the neoconservatives, Cheney and Bush had assumed, section five explains how the Iraq War considerably weakened the Afghanistan War, how Pakistan did not become an honest ally, how NATO did not adequately shoulder its responsibility, and how the light footprint aspect of the CT-S proved disastrous. By the end of section five, it hopefully becomes clear that it was eventually the combination of the Iraq War, Pakistan's duplicity, and some aspects of the CT-S that made the Bush Doctrines ineffective, causing the Bush Administration to rethink its assumptions as well as its policy. Section six is preoccupied with the 'evaluation phase', focusing on the views/reviews/recommendations of the CT-S (and the Afghanistan War in general) by Congress and the media, as well as other influential actors/organisations, of which their joint contribution constituted the public debate on the policy (and on the Afghanistan War). By doing so, the section brings to life the milieu in which the Bush Administration found itself in 2008. Sections five and six indicate how the CT-S, the offshoot of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) strategy, badly failed at the implementation and evaluation phases, forcing the Bush Administration to opt for (or take the first step towards) a COIN-S in the true sense of the word, marking the second turning point in US Afghan policy. It also becomes clear that the failure of the CT-S (and therefore the GWOT strategy) at the implementation and evaluation phases forced the Bush Administration by 2008 to drop its Grand Strategy of Destroying Terrorism for a more doable one of containing terrorism. Section six also provides some brief concluding remarks, by summing up how belief systems and images, bureaucratic politics, and favourable domestic influences swayed the strategy towards CT-S in 2002; just what Rumsfeld, Cheney and the neoconservatives desired. But in 2008, the false assumptions, mounting domestic pressure by a variety of actors, the absence of Rumsfeld and the neoconservatives from the government, the irrelevance of Cheney, the belief systems and images of new actors, including Secretary of

Defense Robert Gates and General David Petraeus, and their strong bureaucratic positions, redirected US Afghan policy towards the direction of counter-insurgency operations.

#### 4.1. THE FORMULATION OF THE CT-S DECISION

*4.1.1. 'My [Rumsfeld's] position was that we were not in Afghanistan to transform a deeply conservative Islamic culture into a model of liberal modernity. We were not there to eradicate corruption or to end poppy cultivation. We were not there to take ownership of Afghanistan's problems, tempting though it was for many Americans of goodwill. Instead, Afghans would need to take charge of their own fate. Afghans would build their society the way they wanted. With our coalition allies we would assist them with reason where we were able.'*<sup>3</sup>

After the Taliban (TB) was defeated and al Qaeda (AQ) was on the run, the National Security Council (NSC) held a meeting in February 2002 in the White House Situation Room to discuss their Afghan strategy. Every policymaker agreed that TB was a 'spent force' and 'so decimated' that they no longer posed a threat. However, there was a deep divide among the policymakers as to how to proceed in Afghanistan. Secretary of State Colin Powell recommended that the American forces join the international peacekeeping forces in Kabul and help extend the Karzai Administration's authority beyond the capital. Powell was aiming to pursue a similar policy to that of the Bush Senior Administration in the post-1989 invasion of Panama, where US forces spread around the country after ousting the Noriega Government to take charge of the whole country. Part of the Powell Doctrines required that American forces, when deployed overseas, should be overwhelming and disproportionate to the forces used by the enemy, especially during stability operations. Richard N. Haass, then the director of policy planning at the State Department, had held informal talks with the European allies of the coalition of the willing, and he believed that 20,000 to 40,000 peacemakers could be recruited for the task – half American, and half from Europe.<sup>4</sup>

National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, generally wary of nation-building operations, did not want to cause confusion because some European allies might see their task as peacekeeping, while the US saw it as fighting terrorists. She was concerned that, if the US deployed more troops, the coalition of the willing might place the responsibility of

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<sup>3</sup>Rumsfeld, Donald. 2011. *Known and unknown: a memoir*. New York: sentinel, p. 682.

<sup>4</sup>Rohde, David and David E. Sanger, 'LOSING THE ADVANTAGE; How the 'Good War' in Afghanistan went Bad', *The New York Times*, August 12, 2007; Jones (2009), op. cit., pp. 115-120, 124; Desch, Michael C., 'Bush and the Generals', *Foreign Affairs*, May/June, 2007, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/62616/michael-c-desch/bush-and-the-generals>>



fighting on the shoulders of US forces. Consequently, she took the middle position, leaving the issue unresolved.<sup>5</sup>

While Rice took the middle position, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld took the opposite position to Powell, because neither did he buy the message that the European allies would provide more troops for peacekeeping operations, nor was it advisable to deploy more troops, since more US troops would ease pressure on the allies to contribute. Rumsfeld – and his main civilian advisors, namely, Paul Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith – opposed the deployment of more troops, who would be required to take part in nation-building and peacekeeping for the purpose of creating a stable and democratic Afghanistan. They had a number of reasons. The main goals – the defeat of TB/AQ and making Afghanistan an example of supporting terrorism risked paying a price – were achieved, so the Pentagon civilian leadership wanted to move on to the next target for its GWOT. As Rumsfeld stated in the title quotation above (and in subsection 4.5.4), committing the US and its troops to nation-building and peacekeeping to create a stable and democratic Afghanistan, though desirable, was not a US goal. It was not necessarily within US powers to achieve such an Afghanistan, since nation-building and peacekeeping, such as the Clinton Administration's engagement in Bosnia (1996) and Kosovo (1999), required a large number of troops and billions of US dollars. The global task, the GWOT, that lay ahead was too big, too broad, and too multidimensional for the Bush Administration, so it could not afford to deploy a large number of troops to every country it was going to 'liberate' to rebuild. A large commitment would limit the Defense Department's ability to act quickly in case another surprise like 9/11 took place – the terrorists would act against the US if they believed that the US was entrenched in Afghanistan and could not act elsewhere. Worst of all, large numbers of troops would make it easier for AQ and TB to portray the US as an occupier like the Soviet Union. Such portrayal would provoke Afghans' historic resistance to invaders, thus diverting the US focus from hunting terrorists. The Defense civilian leadership was of the opinion that never had a foreign invader managed to govern the country. So it was appropriate that Bush left the governing of Afghanistan to the Afghans (mainly warlords, as they held most of the

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<sup>5</sup>Rohde and Sanger, op. cit.; Mann, Jim. 2004. *Rise of the Vulcans: the history of the Bush's war cabinet*. New York: Viking, p. 315.

high-profile positions in the government) and instead focused on chasing terrorism, which required a light footprint.<sup>6</sup>

Leaving a light footprint was equally consistent with Bush and Rumsfeld's 'transformation' agenda, which placed more reliance on technology and less on traditional ground forces. The Defense Department wanted US ground forces to be 'lethal, light...mobile', easily deployable, and organised in small numbers rather than in cumbersome divisions. Accordingly, the Defense Department's war plan for Afghanistan had two new dimensions to it: fighting unconventional warfare (fighting a guerrilla war in mountains), and, fighting 'smart' (using as few soldiers as possible with speed and mobility). The 'fighting smart with few troops' aspect of the plan was contradictory to the Powell rule of deploying an overwhelming number of US forces and then engaging them in keeping the security. A light footprint as well as the lengthy aspect of the GWOT was also incompatible with the Powell Doctrine of avoiding a long-term commitment without a clear plan when to end the operation. Unlike the Powell Doctrines, the Defense Department's 'transformation' plan and its views in general showed much interest in how to run the war and defeat terrorists, but showed little interest in what happened (especially the political process) after the war. It was to be left to the indigenous people. This way, the US was able to avoid creating dependency. For the Defense leadership, US strategic policy should be to provide military, financial and other logistical support to the Afghans, Iraqis, Sudanese and others to rid themselves of the common enemy, and, once they did so, the indigenous people needed to take the lead role in peacekeeping and nation-building. The Vietnam lesson taught Rumsfeld to push US indigenous allies to do more for themselves from the *outset* of the war. Rumsfeld wanted the US in Afghanistan to play only a *supporting* role rather than a *leading* role. Giving the allies the leading role would carry additional benefits: the US would

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<sup>6</sup>Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 297, 353-57, 373, 377, 386-7, 403, 682-683; Feith, Douglas J. 2008. *War and decision: inside the Pentagon at the dawn of the year War on terrorism*. New York, NY: Harper, pp. 20, 100-101; Rohde and Sanger, op. cit.; Dodge, Toby, and Nicholas Redman. 2011. *Afghanistan: to 2015 and beyond*, London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, pp. 23, 27; Rashid, Ahmed. 2009. *Descent into chaos: the world's most unstable region and the threat to global security*. London: Penguin, pp. 137, 201; Jones (2009), op. cit., p. 112-113; Dobbins, James, Afghanistan: Time for a New Strategy?, 'Ending Afghanistan's Civil War Before the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate', Hearing Before Senate Committee on Foreign Relation, March 08, 2007, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/DobbinsTestimony070308.pdf>>; Woodward, Bob. 2002. *Bush at war*. New York: Simon & Schuster, p. 48; Marshall, Joshua Micah, 'Remaking the World: Bush and the Neoconservatives', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2003, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/59380/joshua-micah-marshall/remaking-the-world-bush-and-the-neoconservatives>>

come across as a liberator, not an invader; it would prove to the Afghans that the US was not fighting the Afghans but only those who supported terrorism; the NA would continue to fight the remnants of AQ to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a terrorist base once again – the main US goal after ousting the TB regime – and the US could achieve its main goal with fewer numbers of troops. In short, the NA, or what the Pentagon civilian leadership called the ‘regional leaders’, could both fight terrorists and keep the peace on the streets, so Rumsfeld and his two civilian advisors, unlike Powell, saw no need for additional US forces. If the US was to do more, believed Wolfowitz, it would undermine the Afghan culture of ‘regional power with a great deal of autonomy’.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, there was a specific reason that Rumsfeld refused a bigger commitment. Before Operation Enduring Freedom began in Afghanistan, Rumsfeld visited Afghanistan’s neighbours and found that Pakistan did not trust India, Russia and Iran, and saw the NA as the latter countries’ proxies, India did not trust Pakistan, Russia distrusted US relations with Central Asian states, and almost every state did not trust Russia. In short, the region was full of suspicion and intrigues, and Rumsfeld did not find a ‘straight shooter’, as every neighbouring country had an agenda for Afghanistan, often conflicting, and every country was prepared to jockey for influence in whatever government was going to be established in Kabul. Based on this, as well as Afghanistan’s own complexities – such as decades of civil war, poverty, religious extremism, drug trafficking, and different ethnicities – Rumsfeld told Bush that he believed they would not be able to bring about stability, let alone democracy. He did not see a future in which Afghanistan’s different ethnic groups would come together to create a central government based on the will of the people. He advised Bush to only limit the mission to dealing with the terrorists (counterterrorism) and get out as soon as possible, or else, like Beirut, Afghanistan would become a ‘swamp’ for the US. His Beirut experience had taught him that it was easier to get into something than it was to get out of it. Beirut had also educated him never to use US troops as a ‘peacekeeping force’ – they were too big a target.<sup>8</sup> In short, against what Powell and the State Department wanted, the Defense civilian leadership and Vice-President Cheney were of the opinion that the US

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<sup>7</sup>Rashid, op. cit., pp. 137, 201; Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 293-295, 360, 372-373, 386-387; Feith, op. cit., pp. 102, 133; O'Hanlon, Michael E., 'Flawed Masterpiece', *Foreign Affairs*, May/June, 2002, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/58022/michael-e-ohanlon/a-flawed-masterpiece>> ; Desch, op. cit.; Tanner, Stephen. 2009. *Afghanistan: a military history from Alexander the great to the war against the Taliban*. Philadelphia: Da Capo, p. 304.

<sup>8</sup>Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 21, 397-398.

would fight the foes and liberate the country, but not occupy or engage in peacekeeping or nation-building operations.<sup>9</sup>

If one goes by Bush's campaign speeches, he, too, was of the same opinion as the Defense Secretary and the Vice-President.<sup>10</sup> Bush had made it clear during the election campaign that US ground forces were there to win wars, and consequently should not be used for 'open-ended deployments and unclear military missions', and certainly not for nation-building.<sup>11</sup> Bush and Rice called nation-building 'unfocused', 'ill-judged' and a waste-of-resources activity.<sup>12</sup> When Afghanistan was in the process of being 'liberated' from TB and AQ, Bush told his War Cabinet that US ground forces would not stay to do the 'police work';<sup>13</sup> he wanted to pass policing and other similar tasks on to the coalition of the willing. During the same period, the White House spokesman Ari Fleischer made it clear numerous times that Bush did not want US troops to be engaged in nation-building and peacemaking.<sup>14</sup> As for the decision in question, Bush saw that TB and AQ were defeated, so he accepted the *military* advice that the 5,000 International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and 8,000 US troops in Afghanistan were the right number to *hunt* terrorists. He and the military were 'wary of repeating the experience of the Soviets and the British, who ended up looking like an occupier'.<sup>15</sup>

Accordingly, the decision was made to deploy 8,000 US troops with the mandate to hunt TB and AQ members (a solely *counterterrorism* strategy) and not to engage in peacekeeping and reconstruction,<sup>16</sup> a decision that essentially set out US Afghan policy for Bush's remaining years in office. 5,000 international forces only remained in Kabul, as the extension beyond Kabul to villages would foster resentment among 'a proud population'

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<sup>9</sup>Cheney, Richard B., and Liz Cheney. 2011. *In my time: a personal and political memoir*. New York: Threshold Edition, pp. 323, 347; Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 355; Feith, op. cit., pp. 133-134; O'Hanlon (2002), op. cit.

<sup>10</sup> Bush, George W, Address at the Citadel, December 11, 2001, <[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>; Bush, George W, State of the Union Address to the 107th Congress, January 29, 2002, <[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>11</sup>Rashid, op. cit., p. XLIV.

<sup>12</sup>Bird, Tim and Alex Marshall. 2011. *Afghanistan: how the west lost its way*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 49-51.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>14</sup>Jones (2009), op. cit., p. 113.

<sup>15</sup>Bush, op. cit., p. 207.

<sup>16</sup>Rohde and Sanger, op. cit.; Jones (2009), op. cit., p. 115-120; Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 28; O'Hanlon (2002), op. cit.

and provide more targets for TB to attack.<sup>17</sup> Rumsfeld also successfully persuaded the other policymakers not to let Karzai ‘threaten the use of the United States military against an uncooperative and potentially threatening Afghan leader’. According to Rumsfeld, Karzai should learn to use political incentive/disincentive and patronage to continue to govern.<sup>18</sup> Rumsfeld and his light footprint camp believed that a combination of a small number of US troops, Afghan forces (mostly belonging to warlords), US air power and other modern technology would suffice to establish security in Afghanistan.<sup>19</sup> Thus the Defense Department turned out to be the obvious winner. Richard N. Haass said that Powell ultimately failed to persuade the others. The President, the Vice-President, the Secretary of Defense, the national security staff, ‘all of them were skeptical of an ambitious project in Afghanistan’, said Haass.<sup>20</sup> According to James Dobbins, Powell ‘seemed resigned’. Dobbins told him that it was not going to be satisfactory. ‘Well, it’s the best we could do’, replied Powell.<sup>21</sup>

The next section analyses the impact of policymakers themselves, their individual traits, including belief systems and images, as well as their bureaucratic positions and personal ties as independent variables upon the resulting counterterrorism strategy. Since the strategy was an extension of the GWOT and made by the same policymakers, the section is equally relevant to the decision to intervene discussed in the previous chapter.

## 4.2. THE ROLE OF THE BELIEF SYSTEM AND BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS

*4.2.1. ‘The question was, What shaped the Vulcans’ [the senior policymakers of the George W. Bush Administration] distinctive response to that trauma [9/11]? Not all American leaders would have reacted in the same way as the Vulcans; not all foreign policy teams would have carried out a war on terrorism....What were the instincts, the attitudes, the experiences that lay beneath the Vulcans’ decisions and choices after September 11? The answers to such questions could be found in the careers and ideas of the Vulcans over the previous thirty years.... [T]he Vulcans were influenced by their own experience.’<sup>22</sup>*

The presidential candidate Bush in 2000 was not someone who knew about the outside world, nor did he seem to be interested in it. He had barely travelled outside America, did not read about other countries, and knew no foreign leaders. During his election campaign

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<sup>17</sup>Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 684; Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 407.

<sup>19</sup>Jones (2009), op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>20</sup>Rohde and Sanger, op. cit.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Mann (2004), op. cit., p. 364.

he did not know who Musharraf was and thought that TB were a rock and roll band.<sup>23</sup> However, in response to allegations that he was inexperienced in foreign policy, Bush would reply: 'I've got one of the finest foreign policy teams ever assembled'.<sup>24</sup> Bush therefore was 'a foreign policy novice'<sup>25</sup> dependent on the advice of the members of his most experienced team, including Richard (Dick) Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, and, at times, George Tenet.

Vice-President Richard Cheney had worked for three presidents (Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and George H. W. Bush), been in the House leadership (Minority Whip the second-ranking position in the Republican leadership), and had a seat on the House Intelligence Committee, as part of which he dealt with the Soviet threat to the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia, including Afghanistan.<sup>26</sup> These positions had allowed him not just to gain a world of experience, but also to form a practical sense of how things worked both within Washington and abroad. A vice-president constitutionally has no line of responsibility and is only there to succeed the president if the latter is unable to complete his term. If asked, he could only give advice to the president, and the impact of his advice depended on whether the president listened to it. But Bush listened to Cheney's advice regarding important policy issues. A grateful Cheney and his esteemed mentor Rumsfeld believe that Bush did so for a number of reasons. Bush knew Cheney had no 'personal agenda'<sup>27</sup> and thus the advice was treated as free from any personal or political ambition; Cheney kept his advice confidential and did not disclose it to the media, often kept his counsel in the meetings even if he disagreed with Bush, was a good listener, always did his homework, was always on top of information that enabled him to ask important questions in NSC meetings to provide the President with information that otherwise would have not come to the surface,<sup>28</sup> and got things done in 'an unfussy way'.<sup>29</sup> Others, however, claim that Cheney took advantage of Bush's lack of knowledge in FP and extended his leverage by appointing a team of FP experts, consisting mainly of his staff: in Rice's view, a team that tried to

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<sup>23</sup> Rashid, op. cit., p. XLV; Mann (2004), op. cit., p. 255; Daalder, Ivo H., and James M. Lindsay. 2003. *America unbound: the Bush revolution in foreign policy*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, pp. 1-18.

<sup>24</sup> Mann (2004), op. cit., p. x.

<sup>25</sup> Quinn, A., 'A House Divided', *Extended review article. Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 26:1, April, 2013, pp. 267-281, p. 269.

<sup>26</sup> Cheney, op. cit., pp. 140-142, 151, 242.

<sup>27</sup> Dickerson, John, 'Cheney's Dreadful Lack of Ambition', *Slate*, November 21, 2005.

<sup>28</sup> Cheney, op. cit., p. 306; Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 320.

<sup>29</sup> Quinn, op. cit., p. 275.

establish 'an ultra-hawkish independent power center within the administration';<sup>30</sup> a team which operated separately from the NSC, reportedly increasing Cheney's power by far compared to vice-presidents from previous administrations.<sup>31</sup> It seems that a mixture of personal qualities that Bush seemed to have liked – command of bureaucracy, access to the President, deep knowledge of and experience in FP, having his own FP team, Cheney's decision not to run for presidency, and Bush's promise to keep Cheney involved in policymaking – made Bush respect his Vice-President, value his advice,<sup>32</sup> and as such turn him into one of the most influential vice-presidents in the history of America. The Vice-President in turn trusted, respected and admired his esteemed mentor, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

Like the Vice-President, Rumsfeld was a dominant and well-known politician with an impressive CV: he had been considered four times for vice-presidency (Nixon, Ford, Ford, Reagan), once running for presidency; a member of Congress at the age of 30; a White House Chief of Staff/Secretary of Defense (Ford Administration); an Ambassador to NATO (Nixon); Personal Representative of President Reagan to the Middle East; and a successful (and by 2001 quite wealthy) private sector chief executive officer.<sup>33</sup> Rumsfeld's standing with the President was dramatically enhanced by Cheney's close friendship/working relationship with the Secretary of Defense, dating back over three decades, in which, in various positions, Cheney either had worked as an assistant or deputy to Rumsfeld.<sup>34</sup> A very grateful Cheney argues that it was Rumsfeld who brought him from an academic career into politics, helping him secure various positions at the White House in the 1960s and 1970s. Over the years, Cheney tried to express his gratitude by recommending Rumsfeld for certain posts, and eventually managed to have him appointed as Defense Secretary in the Bush Junior Administration.<sup>35</sup> Ultimately, Cheney was able to repay some of the gratitude he had owed to his 'esteemed mentor', Rumsfeld.<sup>36</sup> Cheney was close to the President and Rumsfeld to Cheney, and over time the two made a good team with the President. These

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 277.

<sup>31</sup> Mann (2004), op. cit., p. 275; Rashid, op. cit., p. 356.

<sup>32</sup> Bush, George W, Address to the Republican National Convention, September 2, 2004, <[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>33</sup> Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 265; Mann (2004), op. cit., pp. 238-239.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 130-131, 140, 176, 285.

<sup>35</sup>Cheney, op. cit., pp. 49, 70-71, 153.

<sup>36</sup>Quinn, op. cit., p. 274; Tenet, George, and Bill Harlow. 2007. *At the centre of the storm: my years at the CIA*. New York: HarperCollins Publisher, p. 204.

two became the driving force when it came to foreign policy, as the President would come to lean a great deal on the experience and stature of his Defense Secretary and Vice-President. Rumsfeld would make policy ideas in NSC meetings, and his close, trusted and old friend/confidant/protégé Cheney would provide additional support for them during the private lunches the President and Vice-President had together. They, therefore, turned into two giants who managed to control decision-making within the Administration.<sup>37</sup> Policy ideas made by other departments, especially the State Department, did not appear to prevail if the two giants opposed them.<sup>38</sup> Examples are the policy proposals to give terrorism a limited definition, to prevent the NA from entering Kabul abandoned by TB before an international force was established, to engage US forces in peacekeeping and nation-building operations, and numerous aspects of US Iraq policy, including the proposition to leave a large number of forces after Saddam was toppled. But, as seen above and in the previous chapter, the Defense Department nearly always prevailed when it fought for a policy idea – and even for more money. The Pentagon's budget was increased from \$293 billion in 2001 to \$427 in 2006. But the budget of the State Department under Powell's leadership continued to constitute approximately 6 percent of that of the Pentagon.<sup>39</sup>

Like Cheney and Rumsfeld, Powell, too, had a world of experience in national security issues: a four-star general who had served as a commander of the US Army Forces Command in 1989, a National Security Advisor (Reagan), Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Bush Senior),<sup>40</sup> and a possible presidential candidate with potential to succeed. It was due to his prestigious figure and his deep experience that the candidate Bush apparently made him part of his team, as it brought political weight to the administration. Bush had an easygoing approach, Rumsfeld maintained, but not in relation to Powell since Bush thought of Powell as a man with a lot of accomplishments.<sup>41</sup> However, Bush was soon to be disappointed. Rumsfeld, Cheney and Feith piled up a number of complaints against Powell

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<sup>37</sup>Ware, John. (2011). Afghanistan: War without an End [the BBC]. <[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byCH5p\\_en1A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byCH5p_en1A)>; Marshall, Joshua M., op. cit.; Woodward, Bob. 2010. *Obama's wars*. New York; Simon & Schuster, p. 169; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 69; Mann (2004), op. cit., p. 275.

<sup>38</sup> Rashid, op. cit., p. LI.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. L.

<sup>40</sup>Powell, Colin L., and Joseph E Persico. 1995. *My American journey*. New York: Random House, pp. 351, 399, 414.

<sup>41</sup>Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 321-324.



that seemed to have distanced Powell from the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld triangle, particularly the President.<sup>42</sup> The grievances included refusing to follow the President's views and instructions, but, preferring to listen to the career diplomats at the State Department (in comparison to Powell, a 'loyal' Rumsfeld made sure he held tight control of the generals to ensure that the civilian decisions – Bush's instructions – were dutifully followed by the military),<sup>43</sup> criticising the administration's policies to people outside the administration, leaking information, not working together with the Defense Department, not telling the truth when he claimed that Bush did not take the State Department's position into account regarding FP, incorrectly claiming to have battled unilateralism and conservatism within the administration, since Powell neither spoke at NSC meetings in strong opposition to the views of the President or others, nor presented clear policy options before the President, being more comfortable talking about poll numbers than recommending policy options, being attuned to public approval, and being hesitant to engage the military but in favour of long-term sanctions. This description of Powell's behaviour clearly shows that Powell did not favour the President's course on any given subject, and, instead of opposing it in NSC meetings, the State Department leaked its opposition to the media. In the process Powell came across as good, reasonable and ignored, while Bush, Cheney and Rumsfeld as bad, unreasonable and in charge. While the above account of Powell's behaviour is open to question, it is obvious that Powell did not appear to *feel* that he was an insider, but an outsider, who found himself more in agreement with his career diplomats than the President – the former are FP experts who often do not agree with contradictions. Consequently, as it seems, Powell found it hard to become part of the circle which was driving the policy. The State Department – 'the first among equals' under the Constitution, which, in principle, is at the core of foreign policy decision-making – should have been the one to influence and implement FP.<sup>44</sup> Powell in theory was the most important advisor to the President with regard to FP as he was in charge of coordinating the US activities overseas, yet it was the Defense Department that drove FP.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Cheney, op. cit., pp. 185-188, 298, 381-382, 425-426; Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 322-324; Feith, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>43</sup>Mann (2004), op. cit., p. 197; Cheney, op. cit., p. 443; Desch, op. cit.

<sup>44</sup>Kegley, Charles W, and Eugene R. Wittkopf. 2012. *American foreign policy: pattern and process*. New York: St Martin's press, p. 344.

<sup>45</sup>Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 70; Rashid, op. cit., p. L.

Powell also found it hard to become part of the inner circle due to the incompatibility of his belief system, including past (military) experience. Cheney and Rumsfeld had little faith in economic sanctions and favoured military options,<sup>46</sup> and therefore naturally found themselves in agreement with the Bush Doctrines that required tough and offensive actions against terrorists. The Vietnam veterans, such as Powell and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, were cautious about wars because many civilian leaders, some of whom had some kind of deferment (e.g. Cheney, who had a student and later a parent deferment), did not understand war, as they studied it in an intellectual way, and had not seen first-hand 'their friends get their heads blown off' for a cause the American public did not believe in. Powell did not trust those civilian officials who had no war experience, and once they pushed for war, Powell saw them as the 'latter-day versions of Vietnam's Robert McNamara'. Powell was appalled and frustrated by the 'docility' of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for blindly fighting the war in Vietnam without asking the political leaders, who almost entirely had started the war, to lay out clear objectives for them.<sup>47</sup> Due to his frustration with the way the Vietnam War was managed by the civilian leadership, Powell developed conditions, later known as Powell Doctrines, for when to engage the US military in war.<sup>48</sup> As explained in section one, many of these doctrines were incompatible with numerous aspects of the CT-S, and consequently Rumsfeld disregarded them, managing to lose Powell's voice in the policymaking process.

Powell partly refrained from being insistent on his doctrines because the GWOT and its subsequent policies were essentially military decisions and, due to his military background, he could not influence them – he thought some members of the administration, especially the turf-conscious Rumsfeld, might feel sensitive.<sup>49</sup> In September 2001, for example, when Secretary of State Powell telephoned Musharraf about the seven US demands, Rumsfeld was quick to complain that some of the demands had military implications, and yet the Defense Department had not been consulted.<sup>50</sup> Though Powell and Rumsfeld previously did not work closely together, Powell must have been aware of the saying among the Republicans that, when it came to defending one's bureaucratic turf, Rumsfeld did not lose.

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<sup>46</sup>Cheney, op. cit., p. 197.

<sup>47</sup> Mann (2004), op. cit., pp. 39-40, 53-54, 119, 185; Desch, op. cit.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>50</sup>Feith, op. cit., p. 16.

Rumsfeld remained the best in terms of a power struggle or a test of wills inside the government.<sup>51</sup> When Rumsfeld became White House Chief of Staff in the Ford Administration, he consolidated his power and cut Kissinger's, and, in order to consolidate his power further, he, as many assumed, engineered the Halloween Massacre of the Cabinet reshuffle. During the Bush Administration, he made the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Myers almost irrelevant; when Rumsfeld appeared before the press, he took care to do almost all the talking, as Myers usually stood quietly alongside or behind Rumsfeld. 'It was a reversal of the way the Cheney-Powell briefings had been conducted'.<sup>52</sup> Ironically, Rumsfeld, as Feith himself admits, would defend the realm of his department, but would equally not hesitate to encroach on the turf of other departments. For example, the Defense Department's advice regarding the GWOT was not limited to the viewpoint of the Defense Department, but encompassed a national and 'government-wide view' that corresponded to the President's views.<sup>53</sup> With such a bureaucratic man (and with such a driving and combative style, someone who 'didn't have the best bedside manner in the world')<sup>54</sup> in the lead of the Pentagon, who had the overwhelming *support* of the Vice-President and the *trust* of the President, Powell could do little when it came to military decisions, such as CT-S, or the decision to launch the GWOT. Moreover, with the President and Vice-President not trusting him, and with his doctrines being thrown out of fashion, he could hardly persuade the President to take his policy opinions in an anti-terrorism war that was run mainly by the Defense Department; a war in which the US military was seen as the main, if not the only, solution to 'root out' terrorism.

Neither would the Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage influence the counterterrorism strategy. Armitage was close to and extraordinarily loyal to Powell, and their friendship went back to the Vietnam War. Supportive of the Powell Doctrines, he shared a similar outlook with Powell on events and people. Like Powell, Armitage was a Vietnam veteran, mistrustful of people with strong views and ideologies, such as Wolfowitz and Feith, as their experiences of Vietnam had taught them that events in many cases outrun someone's preconceptions. Like Powell, he disliked Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz (the feeling was mutual on Rumsfeld's side) and did not get on with Cheney, whom he believed

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<sup>51</sup>Mann (2004), op. cit., p. 58.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 196; Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>53</sup>Feith, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>54</sup>Cheney, op. cit., p. 443.

to have not supported him in the Bush Senior Administration to win the approval of Congress as Secretary of the Army – Cheney likewise disliked him for his continuous grumbling over the matter.<sup>55</sup>

The NSA Condoleezza Rice had previously worked exclusively in the Bush Senior Administration and therefore had been close to none of the two camps. Bush, however, was close to Rice and liked and trusted her more than anyone in the Cabinet. Rice had daily access to Bush, knew the President far better than the rest of Cabinet, and both spent a lot of time together.<sup>56</sup> Due to this personal access and special depth of likeness by the President, Rice could have been one of the most influential NSAs and a strong voice in matters debated at NSC, but she seemingly failed to make herself heard due to three obstacles. The first was her tendency to stay out of policy fights between Powell and Rumsfeld. Instead she often bridged differences in the policymaking process, rather than bringing different policy options to the President to make a decision. She would employ a policy suggestion from one department and process from another. In trying to seek consensus, she temporarily mollified agencies but left fundamental differences unaddressed; consequently, the unhappy agency (most of the time, the State Department) would leak its policy options through the media. Thus, instead of being debated in the NSC, these policy opinions were scrutinised in the media. Rumsfeld disapproved of this ‘detrimental’, ‘uncommon’ and ‘academic’ way of handling the policymaking process, which did not take advantage of Bush’s willingness/firmness to make difficult decisions, and prevented the NSC from engaging in the candid, open and fair hearing of views. Rumsfeld, on numerous occasions, suggested solutions to Rice (in effect, telling Rice how to run *her* NSC), but she refused, perhaps believing that bringing interagency differences before the President would have shown a personal shortcoming on her side.<sup>57</sup>

Second, as Provost at Stanford University, she had no senior-level experience in government, and consequently ‘had some painful professional growing up to do before she would reach the stage of taking on either Cheney or Rumsfeld with either directness or

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<sup>55</sup> Mann (2004), op. cit., pp. 54, 55, 121; Ware, op. cit.; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 68; Quinn, op. cit., p. 281.

<sup>56</sup> Daalder, Ivo H., and I. M. Destler, ‘In the Shadow of the Oval Office; The Next National Security Advisor’, *The Brookings Institution*, January/February, 2009, <<http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2008/12/01-national-security-adviser-daalder>>; Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 324; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 69; Mann (2004), op. cit., p. 315.

<sup>57</sup> Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 326-329; Tenet, op. cit., p. 210; Mann (2004), op. cit., p. 367; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 69.

success'.<sup>58</sup> Consequently, as a novice NSA, she was more tolerated than respected; that was particularly true in relation to Rumsfeld and Cheney. Even, on occasions, Powell made things difficult for her. At times Rumsfeld refused to share war planning with her, and Cheney took away major responsibilities from her, such as chairing the Principals Committee. Standing up to the two was complicated, due to their long experiences in the executive government and to the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld (plus the neoconservatives) triangle whose policy suggestions were the driving forces behind the GWOT; those policy ideas that, by the time of the CT-S, had proved to have been quite effective and successful.<sup>59</sup> Standing against them could have been detrimental for her career, so Rice was careful to avoid confrontation with them.<sup>60</sup> What Rice did do instead was to get on with her job by focusing on *how* to achieve Bush's instructions by translating them into policy. In the process she neither questioned Bush's instincts, the assumptions they were based upon and their likely consequences, nor went against policy opinions made by Rumsfeld and Cheney.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, in the first few years, Bush was certain of what to do and the Defense leadership's policy ideas fitted well with how to achieve Bush's 'what-to-do', so she could hardly question these policy opinions at any rate. Bush's increasing certainty in his convictions and Cheney and Rumsfeld's overwhelming influence over the President made it difficult to run a decision-making process in which all different points of view were discussed in detail. The decision-making instead was conducted in secrecy, making it difficult for Rice to question any aspect of the GWOT as well as the CT-S.

Finally, the realist Rice (from the school of Kissinger and Scowcroft) believed (like Bush) that America was doing the world a favour by expanding the number of free and democratic states and thus creating a new balance of power that favoured freedom. Accordingly, Rice genuinely did not disagree with the calling of 'realism in the service of ideals'.<sup>62</sup> The compatibility of this aspect of her belief system with Bush and the neoconservatives must have been another reason why Rice did not go against the Bush Doctrines and Cheney and Rumsfeld's broad definition of terrorism. Consequently she did not mind if policymaking was

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<sup>58</sup>Quinn, op. cit., pp. 276-277.

<sup>59</sup>O'Hanlon (2002), op. cit.

<sup>60</sup>Mann (2004), op. cit., p. 316.

<sup>61</sup>Daalder, op. cit.

<sup>62</sup>Mann (2004), op. cit., pp. 148, 316; Gordon, Philip H., 'Can the War on Terror Be Won? How to Fight the Right War', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2007, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63009/philip-h-gordon/can-the-war-on-terror-be-won>>; Leffler, op. cit.

hijacked by the two gigantic policymakers – and, to a certain extent, by the neoconservatives.

In the literature on US involvement in Afghanistan, little attention is given to the role of neoconservatism in the Bush Administration. Its role in relation to pushing the US into the Iraq War, however, is covered in great detail. As seen in the previous chapter, the GWOT had one strategy that applied first to Afghanistan and then (with some additional justifications) to Iraq. If there had been no 9/11, there would have been no GWOT and, most likely, no Iraq War.<sup>63</sup> Surely, if the neocons had a part to play in relation to Iraq, they equally had a part to play in regard to Afghanistan. The neocons were present from the outset in the Bush Administration. Alongside Cheney and Rice, some of the neocons – Paul Wolfowitz, Stephen Hadley, Lewis (Scooter) Libby – served as advisors during the 2000 pre-campaign period.<sup>64</sup> Wolfowitz, as the Deputy Secretary of Defense, was the leading and most influential neocon in the Bush Administration, and he did his best to ensure his (neocon) men, most of whom had previously worked for him and been his decades-old friends, took important positions in the administration: Libby as Cheney's Chief of Staff; Zalmay Khalilzad in charge of Afghanistan and Iraq at the NSC; Feith as Under Secretary of Defense for policy; and Richard Perle, one of the godfathers of the neoconservative movement, as the Head of the Defense Policy Board, an independent advisory group to the Secretary of Defense.<sup>65</sup> Cheney and Wolfowitz had developed an enduring bond since the Bush Senior Administration when Wolfowitz had been Defense Secretary Cheney's Under Secretary of Defense. Cheney saw Wolfowitz as one of those (Hadley and Libby) whom Cheney trusted the *most*.<sup>66</sup> Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz knew each other for years, and the former liked and respected the latter. Though a domineering character, Rumsfeld often showed deference to Wolfowitz. In fact, Feith continues, due to his previous posts, namely, the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs in the Reagan Administration and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in the Bush Senior Administration, as well as his position as the Dean of Johns Hopkins' University School of Advanced International Studies, Wolfowitz had become an expert on East Asia and the

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<sup>63</sup> Steven Hurst claims that the invasion of Iraq is impossible to imagine without the terrorist attacks of the 9/11, in Hurst, Steven. 2009. *The United States and Iraq since 1979 hegemony, oil and war*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10391778>, p.1.

<sup>64</sup> Cheney, op. cit., p. 252; Mann (2004), op. cit., p. 251.

<sup>65</sup> Mann (2004), op. cit., pp. 22, 112-13, 251, 273; Feith, op. cit., pp. 24-28, 34, 42.

<sup>66</sup> Cheney, op. cit., p. 278.

Pacific and the Middle East – especially in relation to Iraq, as far as Rumsfeld was concerned, his knowledge was ‘encyclopaedic’. Rumsfeld therefore relied on Wolfowitz for security advice. His closeness with Cheney and Rumsfeld and the fact that Wolfowitz was seen as an expert strengthened Wolfowitz’s bureaucratic muscles in decision-making and gave more weight to the policy suggestions of a Deputy Secretary of Defense whose typical job involved focusing on ‘budget, acquisition, personnel, and management tasks’.<sup>67</sup> According to Feith, the policy idea of using the NA as proxies for the GWOT and as peacekeepers for the CT-S and the advantages of such policy (and, to a certain extent, the suggestion to make the GWOT global) came from Wolfowitz.<sup>68</sup> Though it is debatable whether the idea to use the NA as proxies was that of Wolfowitz, as similar advice was given by the CIA before Wolfowitz, it still shows the impact Wolfowitz and his neocons had on the decision to intervene, as well as the CT-S.

Wolfowitz, Libby and Hadley must have also contributed to the policymaking atmosphere within the pre-campaign environment. Since Wolfowitz served Bush as advisor on national security issues and missiles during the 2000 presidential campaign, it is very possible he (and his men) provided his opinions to the President (and Cheney and Rice) on how to deal with terrorism, how relevant planting democracy in the Middle East was to US national security, and how Saddam was a threat to US national security. Bush, a novice on foreign policy, might have been influenced by these pieces of advice (or seeds of neocon ideas) before 9/11 even materialised. While it is difficult to ascertain whether Wolfowitz (or the other neocons) had offered his opinions, and if in the affirmative, the extent of its influence, if any, upon Bush prior to 9/11, it is clear, however, that both Wolfowitz and Feith during the making of the GWOT strategy made it possible for the neoconservative ideas and principles to be applied to US foreign policy by inserting neoconservative ideas into the advice and recommendations they (especially Feith as part of his job) provided Rumsfeld with, many of which made their way to the NSC meetings headed by Bush. Libby and, to a certain extent, Hadley then were effective within the White House by providing additional support for these ideas.<sup>69</sup> Perle was effective in supporting them when he independently advised the Pentagon civilian leadership.

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<sup>67</sup>Feith, *op. cit.*, pp. 71, 75; Rumsfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 65, 75-84.

<sup>69</sup>Marshall, Joshua M., *op. cit.*

To ascertain the impact of neocons on the decision-making further, it is also important to understand what the neoconservatives' ideas were, and whether they were different to those of the 'defence hawks', Cheney and Rumsfeld. Influenced by Irving Kristol and Nathan Glazer, neoconservatives' ideas could be summed up as follows: go after 'tyranny' by engaging in a direct military war and therefore abandon the strategies of deterrence and containment in favour of offensive military actions – always be prepared to solve problems through military means; be precise and firm in one's decision/belief and (like President Reagan) call a spade a spade; be prepared to pre-empt an attack involving nuclear, chemical or biological weapons; be prepared to act unilaterally if critical US interests were in question and the American allies proved sluggish; preserve US main objectives in the Middle East and South Asia, namely, keeping US and Western access to the regions' oil; the US is and should act like an empire; preserve US pre-eminence (used as the euphemism of 'strategic depth'), partly by developing unmatched military strength and partly by preventing the emergence of a US competitor, especially a hostile one; and use the US pre-eminence (of which the neocons were very *proud*) to shape the future security environment by getting rid of dictators and authoritarian regimes, and instead spread American ideas, mainly democracy, to build a peaceful relationship among the great nations. Neocons (like the Democrat President Woodrow Wilson and unlike Kissinger and Scowcroft) rejected peace through the balance of power in favour of peace through moral security.<sup>70</sup> Many of the above neoconservative ideas and recommendations could be found in the reasoning of President Bush for developing his doctrines, which were the key pillars for the GWOT. The Bush Doctrines equally stressed the importance of military power, adopted an offensive stance by going *after* the terrorists, allowed for pre-emption, and promoted democratic values, more eagerly when the Iraq War was not going in the right direction. Above all, like the neocon

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<sup>70</sup> Dumbrell, John, 'The Neoconservative Roots of the War in Iraq', in *Intelligence and national security policymaking on Iraq; British and American perspectives*, ed. James Pfiffner and Mark Phythain. 2008. Collage station: Texas A&M university Press, pp. 26-27, 32- 34; Kristol, William, and Robert Kagan, 'Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs*, July/August, 1996, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/52239/william-kristol-and-robert-kagan/toward-a-neo-reaganite-foreign-policy>>; Defense Planning Guidance 1992 by Zalmay Khalilzad; Defense Planning Guidance 1993 by Libby; Statement of Principles, *Project for the New American Century*, June 3, 1997, <[http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social\\_science/clarkd/upload/PNAC---statement%20of%20principles.pdf](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/upload/PNAC---statement%20of%20principles.pdf)>; Mann (2004), op. cit., pp. 52, 76, 200, 210- 213.



ideas, the doctrines were bold and aggressive in pursuit of terrorists, and called a spade a spade by calling terrorists 'evil'.<sup>71</sup>

However, to imply that Bush and his Doctrines were 'influenced' by the neocon ideas alone<sup>72</sup> could be an overstatement, as it would take no notice of the role that Cheney and Rumsfeld played.<sup>73</sup> Most importantly, it would disregard Bush as the President. The neocons only served as 'junior ministers',<sup>74</sup> and indeed played a part in the policymaking environment, but they could hardly influence policymaking and resulting decisions if seniors – such as Cheney and Rumsfeld, and, most importantly, President Bush – did not *agree* with them. As a matter of fact, Cheney and Rumsfeld did agree with those ideas, or else Secretary of Defense Cheney would have not approved the Defense Planning Guidance by Libby in 1993, and Cheney and Rumsfeld would have not been signatories to the founding Statement of Principles of the Project for the *New American Century* in 1997 – set up by William Kristol, son of influential neoconservative Irving Kristol, the project was considered 'the political arm' of the neoconservative movement. Like Wolfowitz and the other neoconservatives, Cheney and Rumsfeld, the 'offensive realists' or 'conservative nationalists',<sup>75</sup> gave US military high priority/were in favour of a strong national defence/preferred to use military power to reshape the world according to their own 'interests', *proud* of US unmatched military strength, *certain* of victories if the US engaged in wars, wanted to go on the offensive, favoured unilateralism, disapproved of nation-building/using US forces for peacekeeping, showed strong opposition against Communism/détente/the opening to Beijing, disapproved of any treaty curtailing the use of arms including the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, had a commitment to American exceptionalism, and acted as if they ran an empire.<sup>76</sup> Like the neoconservative views, their viewpoints could equally be traceable to Bush Doctrines, and one could likewise claim that these views influenced the intervention in Afghanistan, and later the CT-S, the subject of this chapter. Dumbrell claims that the neocons' attitude during the pre-invasion (Iraq)

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<sup>71</sup> Bush, George W, West Point Commencement, June 1, 2002,

<[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>72</sup> Rashid, op. cit., p. LII; Daalder and Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 1-18; Mann (2004), op. cit., p. 199.

<sup>73</sup> Gordon, op. cit.; Marshall, Joshau, op. cit.

<sup>74</sup> Dumbrell, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>76</sup> Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 33-34, 205, 231-232; Cheney, op. cit., pp. 333, 374-377, Rashid, op. cit., pp. XLVI-XLVII; Mann, op. cit., pp. 115, 231, 238, 256; Quinn, op. cit., p. 269; Hurst, op. cit., p. 7; Leffler, op. cit.

period was one of 'incautious optimism',<sup>77</sup> of failing to balance ideals with national capacities.<sup>78</sup> The same could be said in relation to the attitude of Rumsfeld and Cheney: the former suggested a wide campaign and the latter supported it without question. One can therefore find it difficult to measure the extent of the neocons' influence over the GWOT or the CT-S since their viewpoints were not incompatible with those of Cheney and Rumsfeld.<sup>79</sup>

It is equally the case in relation to the Iraq invasion, even though many experts blame the neocons for it.<sup>80</sup> As seen in the previous chapter, Rumsfeld and Cheney were as keen on invading Iraq, one of the main reasons the Bush Administration adopted the CT-S in Afghanistan. Syria's interference forced the Reagan Administration to withdraw from Lebanon in a humiliating manner, and Rumsfeld vowed to himself that in future the US would defeat those small countries – such as Syria, Iran, North Korea, and, of course, Iraq – which opposed America's national security interests.<sup>81</sup> Accordingly, like the neocons, whose main objective was (arguably) to oust the Saddam regime in Baghdad, Rumsfeld, too, wanted to get rid of a rogue nation like Iraq that posed a security threat to the US. Iraq and Iran had a history of posing threats to America and thus were included in the 'axis of evil' list. Afghanistan was never on Rumsfeld's list of rogue nations. He and Cheney therefore were not keen on leaving a large number of US troops for peacekeeping or rebuilding purposes. They wanted the GWOT to move to its next stage: Iraq. According to Quinn,<sup>82</sup> if

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<sup>77</sup>Dumbrell, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>78</sup>Nye, op. cit.

<sup>79</sup>One thing, however, that distinguished Cheney/Rumsfeld from Bush (and the neocons) was their lack of enthusiasm in regards to the commitment to spread democracy, particularly in Afghanistan. Rumsfeld and Cheney always preferred a more practical and pragmatic approach; this was seen in Rumsfeld's advice to President Bush before intervening in Afghanistan. As long as a force was willing to take over from the US in those 'liberated' countries, they cared less about the characteristics of the force. Since Bush (and surprisingly the 'realist' Rice) was very enthusiastic about spreading democracy, Cheney and Rumsfeld seemed to have gone with the President and never let it become an obvious disagreement among the three.

<sup>80</sup>Steven Hurst claims that to hold exclusively the neocons responsible for the Iraq invasion would reduce the US intervention of Iraq 'to a kind of historical accident – a consequence of the unforeseeable conjuncture of 11 September and 'neoconservative' influence in Washington.' For Hurst, as explained in the literature review chapter, the invasion was 'a product of a long-established American determination to maintain the position of the United States as the dominant power in the Gulf and of the socio-economic and political transformation of the United States that brought the long-marginalised right wing of the Republican Party [the Bush Junior Administration] to a position of national power for the first time since the 1920s', in Hurst, Steven. 2009. *The United States and Iraq since 1979 hegemony, oil and war*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10391778>, p. 1.

<sup>81</sup>Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>82</sup>Quinn, op. cit., pp. 283-284.

there is anyone from the Bush Administration who has no regret about invading Iraq, it is the 'conservative' ('I mean *really* conservative')<sup>83</sup> Cheney.

It is therefore right to claim that the Bush Administration consisted of an alliance between the 'defence hawks' and the neocons, and 9/11 only 'solidified' the alliance.<sup>84</sup> 9/11 provided the defence hawks and the neoconservatives the chance to turn their (consistent) views into policy,<sup>85</sup> thereby, forming the GWOT strategy. Bush as President was 'an eager enabler', not an 'active architect' in the making of the GWOT. His gut feeling or instinct was to be tough and aggressive towards terrorism. So Cheney, Rumsfeld and the neoconservatives' belligerence fitted very well with the President's own inclinations.<sup>86</sup> Cheney and Rumsfeld, together with the neocons, might have been unable to launch America into such a broad war had President Bush not agreed with them. The Afghanistan and Iraq invasions reflected the temperament of the President himself. 'George W. Bush considered himself a visionary, comfortable with big 'strategic plays' and scornful of piecemeal, incremental policymaking unworthy of America's greatness'.<sup>87</sup> The 'top-down, no-nonsense, decisive, macho leader' wanted, like Presidents Wilson and Roosevelt, to be seen as a 'transformational' president, someone who was in the process of changing the direction of history by making terrorism 'obsolete' on the face of the earth and instead spreading democracy.<sup>88</sup> Since the goal to root out terrorism was so wide and lengthy,<sup>89</sup> Bush accepted the Pentagon's reasoning to employ a narrow CT strategy in Afghanistan.

To conclude, the decision to employ the CT-S (and the GWOT strategy that resulted in the intervention decision in Afghanistan) was consistent with the belief systems of the defensive hawks and the neoconservatives. With Powell and Armitage being outsiders and Powell Doctrines out of fashion, Rice's lack of experience in the executive and her tendency

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<sup>83</sup>Cheney, op. cit., p. 264.

<sup>84</sup>Dumbrell, op. cit., pp. 29, 31-32.

<sup>85</sup>Mann, op. cit., p. 364.

<sup>86</sup>Pfiffner, James, 'Policymaking in the Bush White House', *The Brookings Institution*, October, 2008, <<http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2008/10/31-bush-pfiffner>>

<sup>87</sup>Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>88</sup>Nye, op. cit.; Bush, George W, Address to the Nation on Operations in Afghanistan, October 7, 2001, <[http://georgewbush-](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)

[whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>;

Bush, George W, Address to the United Nations General Assembly, November 10, 2001,

<[http://georgewbush-](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)

[whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>89</sup> Bush, George W, Department of Defense Service of Remembrance at the Pentagon, October 11, 2011, <[http://georgewbush-](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)

to stay out of policy fights, especially her carefulness not to oppose the two giants, and the provision of the neoconservatives' support, made it possible for the gigantic Rumsfeld and Cheney to convince a naive/inexperienced (in FP) and very angry-and-emotional-by-the-9/11-acts President that a CT-S for Afghanistan was the right one. Continuous domestic support gave more weight to the arguments of the defence hawks, whose strategy had just been successfully tested in Afghanistan, to sway the decision further their way.

#### **4.3. AN EXTRA WORD ABOUT THE DECISION-MAKING STYLE - AND THE PRESENCE OF GROUPTHINK**

On the face of it, it seems that the GWOT and CT-S decisions were witnessed in an orderly and structured process, but in reality they, especially the decision relating to the CT-S, were the results or products of a process consisting of back-channel dealings (something that would continue to become worse as the GWOT continued in Afghanistan and Iraq), secrecy, and a dysfunctional advisory system; of a centralised operating style that failed to analyse and evaluate all details of the decisions.<sup>90</sup> In his application of the 'top-down approach', or 'management model', in decision-making, which emphasised inspiration and guidance from above and loyalty and compliance from below, Bush managed to exclude structured debate and disciplined dissent from those at the bottom who disagreed with the decision.<sup>91</sup> An orderly process requires that policy should be evaluated at bottom levels and then moved up level by level until it reaches the Principals Committee in the NSC, by which time it should be scrutinised by all those with relevant experience.<sup>92</sup> But Bush's operating style was the other way around. He simply said, in effect, 'this is the policy, which took me two minutes to make, and now find me ways to implement it'. Experts and career officials from relevant agencies never got the chance to take part in the decision-making, as, unlike President Obama, Bush excluded them.<sup>93</sup> Unlike Obama, Bush seemed not to have liked a prolonged decision-making process known as the multiple advocacy model, in which policy experts were heard, alternative policy options were evaluated, and policy opinions were

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<sup>90</sup>Pfiffner (2008), op. cit.; Smith, Tony, Ludovic Hood, and James Dobbins, 'Losing Iraq', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2007, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63019/tony-smith-ludovic-hood-and-james-dobbins/losing-iraq>>; Joshua Marshall, op. cit.; Rashid, op. cit., p. XLI.

<sup>91</sup>Dobbins, James, 'Who Lost Iraq?', *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2007, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/62828/james-dobbins/who-lost-iraq>>

<sup>92</sup>Pfiffner (2008), op. cit.

<sup>93</sup>Clinton, Hillary Rodham. 2014. *Hard choices*. New York, N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, p. 135.

scrutinised. He wanted decisions fast.<sup>94</sup> The inclusion of career diplomats and qualified executive branch experts with years of experience (and the adoption of a multiple advocacy approach) might have helped a great deal; the experts might have discussed and disagreed with the Bush Doctrines and advised against the declaration of war to defeat terrorism worldwide because of the sheer impossibility of the task;<sup>95</sup> might not have underestimated the enemy and chances of failure; might have questioned the underlying assumptions; might have prevented the effect of groupthink (explained below); or at least shed some light on the history, culture, society and traditions of Afghanistan and its decades-long disputes with Pakistan.<sup>96</sup> According to Gates, Hurst and Saikal, being ignorant of the two countries' details was one major destructive factor, causing the US to announce objectives impossible to achieve.<sup>97</sup> Learning in detail about the Af-Pak disputes, Bush might have requested concrete pledges from Musharraf, and, most importantly, kept a close watch on Pakistan's behaviour post-TB defeat. Had he properly debated the way the warlords were perceived by the Afghans, he might have found alternatives to them, or at least developed a strategy to minimise their influence after TB was defeated. Most importantly, Bush might have discovered alternatives to the decision to invade. In the end, an entirely different decision might have resulted. Instead of discussing these details and the wisdom of the GWOT, the discussion centred on developing a war plan, the issue of how wide terrorism was, and whether Iraq could be included. In addition to Bush's decision-making style, the Pentagon civilian leadership was responsible for derailing the policy process by constantly bringing in the 'Iraq argument'.

It should have been Rice who could have helped the President by adopting the role of an 'honest broker' by ensuring that the contrasting perspectives and policy alternatives from all agencies and experts reached the President in a fair and neutral manner. While Rice, though inadequately, tried it in the intervention decision, she failed to do so in the decision concerning the CT-S. In the latter, as seen in section one, she sided with the

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<sup>94</sup>Pfiffner, James, 'Decision Making in the Obama White House', *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 2(June), 2011, pp. 244-262, p. 256<<http://www.marioguerrero.info/326/Pfiffner2011.pdf>>

<sup>95</sup>Pfiffner (2008), op. cit.

<sup>96</sup>Rashid, op. cit., P. XLII

<sup>97</sup>Gates, Robert Michael. 2014. *Duty: memoirs of a Secretary at war*, p. 589. Steven Hurst dedicates a chapter on how taking no account of the absence of preconditions for democracy in Iraq failed Bush's quest for democracy in Iraq, in Hurst, op. cit., pp. 182-223. Saikal claims that the absence of cultural and historical knowledge of Afghanistan (and Iraq) proved detrimental to the US involvement in Afghanistan (and Iraq), Flood, Philip, 'Book review: Zone of Crisis Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Iraq by Amin Saikal', *The Sunday Morning Herald*, October 10, 2014.

Defense Department. Perhaps she could not have acted as an honest broker, anyhow, due to Bush's operating style: after 9/11 Bush was certain of what to do, and did not like his instincts being questioned. This predisposition negated the need of those perspectives that were incompatible with Bush's instincts, and once Bush made a decision based on his instincts, he would never look back.<sup>98</sup> Instead of listening to facts, and instead of being an analytical decision-maker (like Obama), he listened to his gut feeling, as well as to the ideas invented in the US by those who had ideological purity and partisan loyalty.<sup>99</sup> The belligerent doctrines produced as a result of Bush's feelings were not put to scrutiny because they were consistent with the neoconservatives and the defence hawks' aggressive ideals, ideas and recommendations (the belief systems and images). On the contrary, Cheney and Rumsfeld (together with the neoconservatives) privately showed support for them, adding their share to the paralysis of the decision-making process, making the Cabinet system almost collapse.<sup>100</sup> Between the 9/11 terrorist acts, and the start of the Iraq War – or a period described by Francis Fukuyama as 'the neoconservative moment' –<sup>101</sup> the doctrines had produced impressive results in Afghanistan. Domestic support for the GWOT, especially due to the military success of its first step in Afghanistan, was as high as it had been days after 9/11.<sup>102</sup> So, perhaps no one, including Rice, naturally saw the need to question any aspects of the GWOT and its offshoot, the CT-S, and went ahead with the policy opinions of their originators.

It is important to add that the decision-making style that Bush followed was very prone to 'groupthink'. For the decisions to intervene and to employ the counterterrorism strategy, 'groupthink' seemingly occurred. Groupthink occurs when there is a high degree of cohesion (one of the 'antecedent' factors), which produces a psychological drive for consensus, suppressing both dissent and consideration for alternatives.<sup>103</sup> Irving Janis wrote that the

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<sup>98</sup>Gates, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>99</sup>Pfiffner (2008), op. cit.; Pfiffner (2011), op. cit., p. 256; Joshua Marshall, op. cit.; Dobbins (2007), op. cit.;

<sup>100</sup>Rashid, op. cit., p. XLI.

<sup>101</sup>Fukuyama is quoted in Dumbrell, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>102</sup>'Washington Post-ABC News Poll: State of the Union', January 28, 2002, <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/polls/vault/stories/data012802.htm>>; 'Washington Post-ABC News Poll: America at War', March 11, 2002, <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/polls/vault/stories/data031102.htm>>; 'Washington Post - ABC News Poll: Iraq', February 11, 2003, <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/polls/vault/stories/data021103.htm>>

<sup>103</sup> Janis, Irving L. 1982. *Groupthink: psychological studies of policy decisions and fiascoes*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, pp. 1-13, 175; Jentleson, Bruce W. 2014. *American foreign policy: the dynamics of choice in the 21st century*. New York: Norton, p. 48; Smith, Steve, Amelia Hadfield, and Timothy Dunne. 2008. *Foreign policy: theories, actors, cases*. Oxford[England]: Oxford University Press, p. 17.

most prominent symptoms of groupthink included 'exaggerating favorable consequences, downplaying unfavorable consequences, denying uneasy feeling, exaggerating the remoteness of action commitment, downplaying the extent to which others will see what is happening [...] downplaying personal responsibility',<sup>104</sup> 'an illusion of invulnerability, rationalization to discount warnings and other negative feedback, belief in the inherent morality of the group [...] pressure on dissenters',<sup>105</sup> and the illusion of unanimity and excessive stereotyping.<sup>106</sup>

Some of these symptoms of groupthink were seemingly present in the operating style Bush pursued for the abovementioned two decisions, resulting in a number of consequences (or 'defects'). Bush and 'the triangle' believed that they could easily achieve their ambitious objectives of the GWOT to root out terrorism (a sense of 'we can easily do it').<sup>107</sup> They took at face value Pakistan's pledge to support the GWOT. The shortcomings of the counterterrorism strategy were downplayed, and instead the Defense leadership exaggerated the usefulness of the light footprint strategy. The invasion of Iraq and the installation of a democratic regime were assumed to be as easy as the defeat of the Taliban regime. Alternatives to the invasion of Afghanistan were rarely discussed. Dissent was scarcely there. Powell disagreed with certain aspects of the GWOT, but his voice was drawn out. He, in turn, seemingly tried to downplay personal responsibility. Indeed, he blamed the Defense Department and the Vice-President for most of the shortcomings in the Bush Administration's strategy of the GWOT. The policymakers made little attempt to use experts to ascertain more precise information about both Afghanistan and Pakistan. The policymakers were confident that things would turn out well, so they failed to consider what to be done if things went wrong. In other words, they failed to develop a contingency plan,

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<sup>104</sup> Allison, Graham T., and Philip Zelikow. 1999. *Essence of decision: explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. New York: Longman; Art, p. 284.

<sup>105</sup> Aldag, Ramon J., and Sally Riggs Fuller, 'Beyond Fiasco: A Reappraisal of the Groupthink Phenomenon and a New Model of Group Decision Processes', *Psychological Bulletin*, 1993, <[http://web.mit.edu/writing/2012/Grad\\_Summary\\_Readings/beyond\\_fiasco\\_final.pdf](http://web.mit.edu/writing/2012/Grad_Summary_Readings/beyond_fiasco_final.pdf)>

<sup>106</sup> Neack, Laura, Jeanne A. K. Hey, and Patrick Jude Haney. 1995. *Foreign policy analysis: continuity and change in its second generation*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, pp. 107-108; Hudson, Valerie M. 2007. *Foreign policy analysis: classic and contemporary theory*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Pub, pp. 69-70; Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, op. cit., p. 354.

<sup>107</sup> Dobbins, James, 'Who Lost Iraq?', *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2007, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/62828/james-dobbins/who-lost-iraq>> ; Smith, Tony, Ludovic Hood, and James Dobbins, 'Losing Iraq', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2007, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63019/tony-smith-ludovic-hood-and-james-dobbins/losing-iraq>>

especially in regard to the double game played by Pakistan and to the possibility of the US being embroiled in Afghanistan. Bush and most of his advisors believed that by launching the GWOT, they were doing the world a favour by ridding it of terrorism and evil. He and most of his advisors were strongly of the view that the US could afford to fight the war alone if need be. As will be explained in sections four and five below, both decisions resulted in undesirable outcomes.

Obama, on the other hand, used all the methods prescribed by Janis<sup>108</sup> to minimise the 'dysfunctional consequences' or 'defects' of groupthink. Unlike Bush, he tried to remain neutral between the two opposing groups: the Joe Biden and the David Petraeus camps. Moreover, he encouraged an atmosphere of open debate between the two camps, allowing both groups to question each other's policy assumptions. He was willing to spend a sizeable amount of time to survey all warning signals from the rival group. And, unlike Bush, he rarely stereotyped the views of any of the camp. When Biden questioned the importance of the Afghanistan War to US national security, he let him speak his reasons. He gave a great deal of detail to avoid Afghanistan turning into another Vietnam, and therefore imposed a limit ('caveat') on US stay in Afghanistan. He listened carefully to David Petraeus's claim that Afghanistan was very important to US national security. He partly agreed and therefore approved the surge. Time and again, however, he raised questions with regard to the role of Pakistan in the Afghanistan War, allowing for a detailed analysis of the impact of Pakistan in the employability of the new strategy.

Whenever he was unsure about an aspect of the policy opinions/assumptions, Obama would consult lower officials and experts from outside of the administration. Moreover, he discussed the contrasting views of the two groups with trusted associates. One was former Secretary of State Colin Powell. Obama even took a step further by assigning the role of the devil's advocate to Biden to press the military to present a better case for more troops. Biden, with the backing of Obama, established a small group, mostly made up of former military men, to discuss the military plan presented by McChrystal and Petraeus. The group eventually came up with its own alternative military plan. Obama allowed the plan to be considered, even though it upset the military camp. Obama was a president who strongly favoured the consideration of alternatives.

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<sup>108</sup>Aldag and Fuller, op. cit.; Neack, Hey, and Haney, pp. 108-109; Hudson, op. cit., pp. 72-73.



All the steps taken by Obama suggest that he aimed at curbing the emergence of groupthink. Indeed, his advisors made it clear by saying that Obama tried to avoid a decision-making style followed by Presidents Johnson and Bush Junior.<sup>109</sup> Janis argues that in some small groups but not all, 'conformity pressures begin to dominate, the striving for unanimity fosters the pattern of defensive avoidance [which causes the symptoms of groupthink, e.g. exaggerating favourable consequences], with [...] the characteristic reliance on shared rationalizations that bolster the least objectionable alternative'.<sup>110</sup> Conformity was exactly what Obama's decision-making style – 'multiple advocacy'<sup>111</sup> – avoided. Thus, the results (the decision to surge and the decision to draw down) were not 'groupthink'.

#### 4.4. ASSUMPTIONS

*4.4.1. '[T]he nature of the response [to 9/11] was also shaped by some deeply embedded assumptions and beliefs within the administration about foreign policy and the appropriate role of the military.'*<sup>112</sup>

As seen, the Bush Doctrines, the main pillars for the GWOT and, of course, the CT-S discussed in section one were all supported by belief systems and images of the neocons and the 'defence hawks', which fitted comfortably with the gut feelings of the President. These belief systems and images formed assumptions that the CT-S (and therefore the GWOT strategy) were based upon, assumptions that convinced the principals that the strategy would successfully accomplish its overreaching objectives. They are considered below, but the grounds or reasoning, which the assumptions were based upon, are excluded for most of them since they are already covered in this and the previous chapter. (The same is the case in relation to referencing, as most of them are already acknowledged.)

First, the defence hawks, the President and the neocons had extraordinary belief in US capabilities (money, weaponry, military might, and political influence) and, therefore, seemed to have been incautiously 'optimistic' and 'arrogant' in assuming that the US would achieve its revolutionary objectives of rooting out terrorism worldwide.<sup>113</sup> Second, the overconfidence was partly due to the GWOT being a different war, as it required a small

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<sup>109</sup> Woodward, Bob. 2010. *Obama's wars*. New York; Simon & Schuster, pp. 157-158.

<sup>110</sup> Allison and Zelikow, op. cit., p. 284.

<sup>111</sup> Pfiffner, James, 'Decision Making in the Obama White House', *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (June), 2011, <<http://www.marioguerrero.info/326/Pfiffner2011.pdf>>

<sup>112</sup> Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 48-40.

<sup>113</sup> Dumbrell, op. cit., pp. 31-32; Rashid, op. cit., p. XLVIII; Loyn, op. cit., p. 293.

number of troops (equipped with highly technical weapons including US extraordinary air power), since most of the ground forces would be made up of indigenous allies, e.g. the NA, who did the actual fighting. Accordingly, the chances of US casualties and big spending were much slimmer. In total, the GWOT was presumed to need thousands of US ground troops, as opposed to hundreds of thousands, and a few billion US dollars, rather than hundreds of billions. In the period between the ousting of the TB in Afghanistan and the invasion of Iraq, everything was going the administration's way,<sup>114</sup> including the effectiveness of the assumption in question, as Afghanistan had been 'liberated' with a few hundred US Special Forces and CIA operatives, the cost of the war in Afghanistan stood at \$3.8 billion by January 2002, and the annual cost of the GWOT was expected to be less than \$10 billion.<sup>115</sup> Third, the support of the opposition groups and the light footprint strategy, as assumed, would ensure that the US was perceived as a supporter rather than an invader or occupier, and the war seen not as by America against the Afghans, or America against Islam, but by Afghans against the Arab foreigners. Consequently, the US would not meet opposition in Afghanistan (and the countries in which they were going to intervene next). Fourth, since the Bush Administration saw the TB opposition, NA and other warlords as 'liberators' and 'friends', the administration seemingly assumed that ordinarily Afghans would equally welcome them. Rumsfeld and Cheney did not assume that allying with the NA and its backers, some of whom were Pakistan's mortal enemy, such as India, would anger Pakistan, since the US was also supporting the Pashtun in the south, thus making sure Pakistan's interests in Afghanistan were met. Fifth, once Pakistan accepted the seven US demands, Pakistan was presumed to support the GWOT in Afghanistan with the NA in the leading role. The Bush Administration assumed that Pakistan would continue to keep supporting seven US demands even when Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan had been reduced from ninety percent (during the TB regime) to almost zero (during the Karzai Government). Due to this assumption, the Bush Administration (understandably) did not need to leave more troops after the defeat of TB because TB was 'a spent force'; a pure CT-S would suffice in case, *just* in case, some TB or AQ members were hiding somewhere. Those TB/AQ who had crossed to Pakistan were assumed to be seriously dealt with by the US's 'vital ally': Pakistan.

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<sup>114</sup> Dumbrell, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>115</sup> O'Hanlon (2002), op. cit.

Sixth, it was presumed that other terrorist groups and, most importantly, rogue states would change their behaviour if Bush showed resolve and hit the TB regime hard. Seventh, Bush strongly assumed that, after the ousting of the TB regime, a relatively democratic and stable Afghanistan would be born. The US, as assumed, was a force for good in the world and it should therefore try to help the world, especially South Asia (including in Afghanistan) and the Middle East by spreading democracy. Bush assumed that the people of these subcontinents would support US intervention, since they had been oppressed for years but had no chance to liberate themselves.<sup>116</sup>

Eighth, Cheney, Rumsfeld, the neoconservatives and Bush were not concerned by losing or gaining support of coalition/allies. The GWOT was a US war, and, if need be, it could fight it alone. Ninth, after 'liberating Afghanistan', however, it was assumed that the coalition of the willing, and later NATO, would shoulder responsibility<sup>117</sup> for the post-TB Afghanistan, as the US military role was assumed to win wars, not engage in peacekeeping, policing or building nations.

Tenth, the Bush Administration partly employed such bold objectives because of the extraordinary support it received from both within (from Congress and the general US public) and outside (NATO historically invoking Article 5, most Muslim states showing support, and allies contributing troops and treasure) the US. The administration assumed that by adopting the task of safeguarding the values integral to the US, as well as many other liberal democracies, the administration would continue to receive the same internal and external support in the next step of the campaign. It was presumed that terrorism and states supporting terrorism were an enemy not only to the US, but also to the Western way of life, civilisation, democratic and liberal values, and Islam itself.<sup>118</sup> Islam was a peaceful religion but terrorists blasphemed it by giving it a strict interpretation. Numerous international terrorist organisations that used radical Islam as their ideology were bent on destroying the many Muslim countries in the Middle East (i.e. Saudi Arabia) and South Asia (i.e. Pakistan). Thus Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld and the neocons assumed that it was doing the

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<sup>116</sup> Bush, George W, West Point Commencement, June 1, 2002, <[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>117</sup> Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>118</sup> Bush, George W, Address to the United Nations General Assembly, November 10, 2001, <[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

world a *favour* by ridding it of terrorism. In Afghanistan it had succeeded and the policymakers did not want to get stuck any longer to police the streets. It wanted to extend its task of ridding the world of terrorists and rogue states. So Iraq was next. Eleventh, the President, defence hawks and neocons assumed that the Iraq War would not affect their CT operations in Afghanistan because the Iraq War would end as quickly as the Afghanistan War.<sup>119</sup> Incidentally, some call it the ‘Afghanistan War’, but the policymakers strongly assumed by the beginning of 2002 (especially at the time they made the CT-S) that there was no war in Afghanistan – it had *ended*, as TB and AQ were gone: killed, injured, imprisoned, or simply disappeared. Rumsfeld made a public announcement to that effect in early 2003.<sup>120</sup> If there was no war in Afghanistan, the US would not be engaged in two wars, but one: only in Iraq. Like the Afghanistan War, the Iraq War would, too, be successful within months, and the US would be moving to the third target: perhaps one of the states from the ‘axis of evil’.<sup>121</sup>

So far, the chapter has covered the formulation phase, focusing on how the policy was made and upon what assumptions. It has also covered policymakers themselves, their bureaucratic positions, and belief systems and images as variables that impacted the CT-S (and the GWOT strategy). Following Steven Lamy’s formula, the remaining half of this chapter focuses on the ‘implementation’ and ‘evaluation’ phases of the CT-S. Since CT-S was a derivative of the GWOT strategy, the two sections equally are relevant to the latter.

#### 4.5. THE ‘FALSE ASSUMPTIONS’

4.5.1. *‘I have a real concern that given our preoccupation in Iraq, we’ve not devoted sufficient troops and funding to Afghanistan to ensure success in that mission....Afghanistan has been the forgotten war.’*<sup>122</sup>

In order to show the falsehood of some of the above assumptions, especially the effect of the Iraq War over the Afghanistan War, the preoccupation of the Bush Administration with the Iraq War (which turned the Afghanistan War into a ‘forgotten’ one)<sup>123</sup> is divided

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<sup>119</sup> Gates, op. cit., p. 115.

<sup>120</sup> Rohde and Sanger, op. cit.; Tanner, op. cit., p. 322.

<sup>121</sup> Bush, George W, State of the Union Address to the 107th Congress, January 29, 2002, <[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>122</sup> The view of Democratic Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Representative Ike Skelton of Missouri, in Shanker, Thom and Steven Lee Myers, ‘Afghan Mission Is Reviewed as Concerns Rise’, *The New York Times*, December 16, 2007.

<sup>123</sup> Rohde and Sanger, op. cit.

into two phases: from the making of the GWOT strategy up to the invasion of Iraq, and from the invasion to surge in 2007. Doing so would also bring to the surface the milieu in which the policymakers operated from its invasion of Iraq right towards the end of the administration. This would further shed some light on how and why the Bush Administration had to employ a COIN-S in Iraq, thus leading the way for the strategy in Afghanistan, too.

The NSC's debate over the possibility of whether to include Iraq in the first phase of the GWOT was something that proved to be a distraction to the Afghanistan War, preventing the NSC from debating the Afghan strategy in detail. After the Afghanistan mission ended, the NSC, to prepare for the Iraq invasion and to produce in-depth plans for post-Saddam Hussein Iraq, had daily meetings throughout 2002 and early 2003, not just among themselves but with allies, to an extent that the policymakers' phone lines were 'burning'.<sup>124</sup> Afghanistan had already begun to slip down the priority list.

One issue in 2002 that divided the policymakers was whether to take the Iraq case to the United Nations (UN). While Powell argued in favour, Rumsfeld argued against. France, Germany and Russia had warned that it would veto any resolution that authorised military action in Iraq. The defence hawks and the neocons bombarded France and Germany with criticism; Rumsfeld even introduced the construct of 'Old and New Europe'. The media of the three countries inflamed the situation. There were even predictions by some analysts that NATO would split.<sup>125</sup> The opposition of those allied countries, which had shown overwhelming support for the intervention in Afghanistan, revealed the first blow to the assumption that the US would continue to receive the international support for its sustained anti-terrorism campaign. The US policymakers, with all their 'soft power', could not persuade their closest NATO allies, let alone others, such as Russia or China, to join the US in the second phase of the anti-terrorism campaign to remove the Saddam Hussein regime, and therefore had to invade Iraq without a UN resolution. It must have been the first revelation to Bush that the world did not operate in the black and white frame (be with or against us) in which he had seen it in late-2001.

After the ousting of the Iraqi regime in spring 2003 up to early 2008, the Iraqi saga kept the administration preoccupied for three main developments: the WMD saga (2003-2004), the increasing sectarian violence/insurgency in Iraq (2004-2007), and the surge (2007 to

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<sup>124</sup> Bush, *op. cit.*, pp. 223- 271; Cheney, *op. cit.*, pp. 370-401; Rumsfeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 429, 457.

<sup>125</sup> Jones (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 246; Rashid, *op. cit.*, p. 349; Bird and Marshall, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-116.

early 2008). The US media attacked Bush and Cheney for lying and misleading the country into the Iraq War when WMD (used as a main justification for invasion) could not be found in Iraq. Eventually, Tenet and Hadley had to take the blame for the wrong intelligence, and Rice issued a public apology.<sup>126</sup> This badly hurt the credibility of the Bush Administration. Thus, by 2004, not just international support, but also domestic support for the GWOT began to fade away. Bush, the defence hawks and the neoconservatives were no longer in their honeymoon period.

As of 2004, and especially in 2005 and 2006, the sectarian violence in Iraq started to get worse, turning the country into, as Bush put it, a 'hell'. There were 1,000 attacks per week, 120 Iraqis died every day, 2500 US soldiers were killed, and another 19,000 were injured by 2006. The American media, Bush continues, not to say worldwide attention (at the cost of almost forgetting the Afghanistan War) focused on the sectarian violence in Iraq.<sup>127</sup> Sheryl Gay Stolberg remarks that, even though Bush in November 2006 was in Riga to focus on the Afghanistan War, the Iraq War dominated the President's time, as on every journalist's lips was the dire situation in Iraq.<sup>128</sup> Due to the unpopularity of the Iraq War, the Bush Administration lost control of both Houses of Congress in the mid-term elections in late-2006. Unlike 2001 and 2002, many members of Congress, especially the Democrats, including Congressman John Murtha of Pennsylvania, Senator Joe Biden, and the new House Speaker Democrat Nancy Pelosi, asked for a rapid US withdrawal.<sup>129</sup> Some Democrats were considering 'impeachment hearings' against Bush.<sup>130</sup> Bush and Cheney's popularity (not just at home but worldwide) was at its lowest, and two-thirds of Americans disapproved of the way Bush was handling Iraq, and a broad majority of Americans believed the US had 'lost' the war in Iraq.<sup>131</sup> Rumsfeld was worried that in such a milieu the administration would not be able to sustain the effort.<sup>132</sup> Rumsfeld had experienced it first-hand, as, during his tenure as Ford's White House Chief of Staff, a combination of a negative media campaign, the rise of a divided and sceptical public, and the Senate's refusal to approve funds for the Vietnam

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<sup>126</sup> Cheney, op. cit., pp. 402-405, 413; Bush, op. cit., pp. 262, 268.

<sup>127</sup> Bush, op. cit., pp. 361-364, 367; Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 679-680, 691-692.

<sup>128</sup> Stolberg, Sheryl Hay, 'Bush Declines to Call Situation in Iraq Civil War', *The New York Times*, November 29, 2006.

<sup>129</sup> Bush, op. cit., pp. 355, 371-72.

<sup>130</sup> Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 706.

<sup>131</sup> Baker, Peter, Jon Cohen, 'Americans Say U.S. Is Losing War', *The Washington Post*, December 13, 2006; Bush, op. cit., p. 367.

<sup>132</sup> Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 695.

War succeeded in forcing the US Government to end the unpopular war. These three domestic factors were present in America in 2006. The US, with all its *unmatched* capabilities, was on the brink of losing its GWOT in Iraq (and, as will be seen below, in Afghanistan). Against what the administration had assumed, when the policy met the reality in Iraq (and to an extent in Afghanistan) democratisation, liberation and stabilisation gave way to a lengthy insurgency and civil war;<sup>133</sup> the US and Bush did not receive a hero's welcome both at home and in the two invaded countries, even though he was rooting out terrorism (an enemy to all) and planting democracy (beneficial for every human being); the GWOT had cost so far thousands of US lives as well as hundreds of billions of US dollars, so it was no longer an economical war; US abilities, especially its technologically advanced weapons, had failed to substitute for ground forces; the US could not rid the world of terrorism if it could not do so in Iraq and Afghanistan; and the world (and the bureaucracy in Washington, D.C.) proved to be more complex than had been perceived by Bush. Congress, mainly the Democrats, had turned Washington itself into a 'war zone' for Bush.<sup>134</sup>

During 2006, the administration and the 'deeply' concerned President remained engaged with conducting numerous reviews on Iraq.<sup>135</sup> Bush himself met with scholars, generals and Iraqis to review the Iraq strategy. Luckily, General David Petraeus offered a new strategy to Bush named COIN-S, a strategy that Petraeus had successfully used in Mosul early in the war. Petraeus told Bush that the strategy's premise was that basic security was needed before political gains could follow, and once the US won over the general population, terrorists would lose support among the population and disappear of their own accord.<sup>136</sup> For Petraeus, what was required in Iraq and Afghanistan was a clue about the people and their cultures, as well as the motivations and politics of the insurgency, not 'transformation'. By using highly technical weapons to hunt terrorists, the US would never win over the population – only reversing the feeling of security was the answer.<sup>137</sup> It was the reverse of Rumsfeld's CT-S, which cared not about the general population and their security, but about hunting terrorists. For Rumsfeld, it was the task of the Afghans (and the Iraqis) to

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<sup>133</sup> Gordon, op. cit.

<sup>134</sup> Gates, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>135</sup> Bush, op. cit., pp. 361-372.

<sup>136</sup> Bush, op. cit., pp. 361-372; Cheney, op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>137</sup> 'Generation Kill: A Conversation With Stanley McChrystal', *Foreign Affairs*, March/April, 2013, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/discussions/interviews/generation-kill>>; Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 56.

establish security for themselves. Rumsfeld was of the opinion that the US needed to help the Iraqis to help themselves, and if the US did not take its hands off the bicycle seat, the Afghans/Iraqis would never learn to ride. Bush disagreed, saying if the Iraqis 'can't do it, we will. If the bicycle teeters, we're going to put the hand back on. We have to make damn sure we do not fail.'<sup>138</sup> Bush's quotation was another way of saying to throw the 'light footprint' part of the strategy out of the window. It was another way of admitting that the light footprint aspect of the GWOT was based on a false assumption, as ordinary people could not be assumed, at least for the first few years, to establish security without US help. Bush's quotation showed the initial thinking in the direction of a COIN-S, and when Rumsfeld showed opposition he was replaced by Robert Gates.

The false assumptions seemed to have weakened the bureaucratic muscles of the defence hawks and the neoconservatives. Wolfowitz and Feith, those who advocated a light footprint, were long gone from the administration. Cheney's Chief of Staff Libby had been indicted by the federal grand jury for having leaked the covert identity of a secret CIA agent, and the indictment had adversely affected Cheney's FP team. Moreover, Rice was the Secretary of State, and, unlike 2002, she had grown in confidence and was more protective of the State Department's turf. Unlike Powell, she was close to Bush and consequently much more influential in FP. Unlike Rumsfeld, she got on well with the new Secretary of Defense Gates, who was more of a team player, and both did not tend to allow Cheney to interfere in their departments' affairs.<sup>139</sup> In fact, the NSC excluded Cheney from certain FP decision-making, particularly when it knew that Cheney had opposing ideas.<sup>140</sup> Cheney's power over FP had, therefore, diminished considerably, and it was no surprise that Rumsfeld was easily replaced, despite Cheney's attempts to save him.<sup>141</sup> From this point on, one could see that Rice, Hadley, and Gates, with whom Bush agreed on virtually every issue,<sup>142</sup> as well as General Petraeus, began to influence Bush in handling the GWOT. Moreover, by now Bush

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<sup>138</sup> Rumsfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 667; Bush, *op. cit.*, p. 371; Bush, George W, Address to the Nation on Iraq, January 10, 2007,

<[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>139</sup> Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. 11; Gates, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-87, 91-92, 98-100; Mann (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 97.

<sup>140</sup> Cheney, *op. cit.*, p. 460.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 442-443.

<sup>142</sup> Gates, *op. cit.*, p. 584.



was not so much in broadcasting mood as he had been in early 2002, so he did not seem to mind his instincts being questioned, especially by his NSA Hadley.<sup>143</sup>

As Bush approved the surge, the administration was once again engaged with the Iraq saga because of the unpopularity of the surge among the members of Congress, the media and influential actors. Senator Barack Obama, Democratic Majority Leader in the Senate, Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, Republican Senator Chuck Hagel, Senator Biden, and former Secretary of State Powell, among many, expressed doubts, claiming it would not solve the sectarian violence.<sup>144</sup> Congress instead sent Bush a war-funding bill, mandating the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq – Bush vetoed the bill. *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*' outlooks were equally pessimistic, calling the Iraq War 'lost'.<sup>145</sup> There was a lot of pressure upon the President and his team, to an extent that, six months into the surge, Bush and Hadley were considering withdrawing some of the surge troops.<sup>146</sup> The pressure, however, began to ease off after Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker testified before the Senate on September 10, 2007, saying that the surge was successful.<sup>147</sup>

At least in this instance Bush's gamble paid off: the surge had worked. But by then it was too late for the forgotten war in Afghanistan, as a total of six years had been wasted! The Administration, Congress, the media and the public at large had little time for Afghanistan over these years. As the situation began to deteriorate in late-2003 in Iraq, Afghanistan followed suit, and by 2006 the violence was at its worst. Emboldened insurgents had managed to launch a 'perfect storm' (a sudden rise in insurgents' terrorist activities) with the aim of toppling the Karzai Government and force US and NATO forces

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<sup>143</sup> Daalder and Destler, op. cit.

<sup>144</sup> Biden, Joseph R., 'United States Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr. Opening Statement in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Hearing "Iraq: An Update From the Field" Witness: The Honorable Ryan C. Crocker, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq', *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, July 19, 2007, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/BidenStatement070719.pdf>>; Lugar, Richard G., 'Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Senator Richard G. Lugar Opening Statement for Hearing on Iraq', *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, July 19, 2007, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/LugarStatement070719.pdf>>; Bush, op. cit., pp. 378, 382.

<sup>145</sup> Sussman, Dalia Poll Shows View of Iraq War Is Most Negative Since Start, *The New York Times*, May 25, 2007; Cohen, Jon, and Dan Balz, 'Poll: Most Americans Opposed to Bush's Iraq Plan', *The Washington Post*, January 11, 2007; Bush, op. cit., pp. 378, 384-385.

<sup>146</sup> Sanger, David, 'Iraq Pullback': In White House, Debate Is Rising on Iraq Pullback', *The New York Times*, July 9, 2007.

<sup>147</sup> Petraeus, David H., 'Report to Congress on the Situation in Iraq by General David H. Petraeus Commander, Multi-National Force-Iraq', Hearing Before *Senate Committees on Foreign Relations*, September 11, 2007, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/PetraeusTestimony070911a.pdf>>; Bush, George W, Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Iraq, September 13, 2007, <[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

out of Afghanistan, and by 2007 and 2008 it was at its worst.<sup>148</sup> The administration's reaction to the changing situation in Afghanistan varied over the six years. Between 2003 and 2005, the administration would use, especially for the 2004 presidential election, the 'achievements' in institution-building, human rights, education, telecommunications, construction, health care, and media the US had attained in Afghanistan as a 'success story', and well into 2005 the policymakers, US officials from Afghanistan, certain members of Congress, and the media to a certain extent believed that the US was *winning* in Afghanistan.<sup>149</sup> By 2006, however, the administration knew that there was resurgence on the rise in Afghanistan and that the US had *not* been winning.<sup>150</sup> Though the administration initially tried to cover it,<sup>151</sup> some of its senior members began to admit that the administration could not provide sufficient resources, namely, enough boots on the ground, sufficient attention, and an appropriate level of financial aid, because all their attention was focused on Iraq.<sup>152</sup> On the contrary, key US capabilities – such as CIA specialists, surveillance assets, Special Forces units, helicopters and transport planes – and the most experienced and the best qualified US personnel from all relevant agencies, including the State and Defense Departments (e.g. the Afghan-American Zalmay Khalilzad, who knew Afghanistan 'best'), as well as the CIA – were taken out of Afghanistan and shifted to Iraq. The US had

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<sup>148</sup> Shanker, Thom and Steven Lee Myers, 'Afghan Mission Is Reviewed as Concerns Rise', *The New York Times*, December 16, 2007; Shanker, Thom, '2 Commanders Picked to Lead War Efforts Beyond 2008', *The New York Times*, April 24, 2008; Jones (2009), op. cit., pp. 204, 231.

<sup>149</sup> Khalilzad, Zalmay, 'Statement Ambassador and Special Presidential Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad Before Senate Committee on Foreign Relations', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, June 7, 2005, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/KhalilzadTestimony050607.pdf>>; Rice, Condoleezza, 'Opening Remarks by Secretary of State-Designate Dr. Condoleezza Rice, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, January 18, 2005, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/secretary-of-state-nomination-part-i>>; Luger, Richard, 'Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Chairman Richard G. Lugar Opening Statement for Nomination Hearing for Zalmay Khalilzad to be Ambassador to Iraq', *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, June 7, 2005, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/LugarStatement050607.pdf>>; Gates, op. cit., p. 198; Bush, op. cit., p. 309; Cheney, op. cit., pp. 412, 419; Yingling, Paul L. 'An Absence of Strategic Think: On the Multitude of Lessons Not Learned in Afghanistan', *Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism*, December 15, 2011, <<http://cpost.uchicago.edu/blog/2011/12/15/paul-l-yingling-an-absence-of-strategic-thinking-on-the-multitude-of-lessons-not-learned-in-afghanistan/>>; Bush, George W, State of the Union Address to the 108th Congress, Second Session, January 20, 2004, <[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>; Bush, George W, Address to the Republican National Convention, September 2, 2004, <[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>150</sup> Rashid, op. cit., p. LVI; Jones (2009), op. cit., pp. 208-10; Bush, op. cit., p. 211; Gates, op. cit., p. 198.

<sup>151</sup> Yingling, op. cit.; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 150.

<sup>152</sup> Shanker and Myers, op. cit.

20,417 troops in Afghanistan but 141,100 in Iraq in 2006, and out of the overall funding allocated for the two wars, only 13 percent went to Afghanistan, the rest (87 percent) was directed to the Iraq War. In the same year, due to the Iraq pressure, US aid dropped by 38 percent for Afghanistan, and Rumsfeld wanted to withdraw 3000 US troops, but, due to the opposition from NATO and US officials in Afghanistan, he had to abandon the plan.<sup>153</sup> During the research for this thesis it became clear that the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations between 2004 and early 2008 held a few hearings on Afghanistan compared to many dozens on Iraq, especially hearings on evaluating new strategies for the latter. Afghanistan, too, was in need of reviving the CT-S, as its 'bicycle' by 2006 was equally 'teetering', but the administration (and Congress) did not have the necessary resources as well as *time* and *attention* to focus on Afghanistan, and therefore could not act in accordance with the changing situation in Afghanistan, allowing the 'good war' in Afghanistan to go 'bad'.<sup>154</sup> In a frank admission before the House Armed Services Committee, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Michael Mullen, with whom Gates would agree, said: 'It is a matter of resources, of capacity. In Afghanistan, we do what we can. In Iraq, we do what we must.'<sup>155</sup> It was not just a matter of 'resources', 'capacity', time and attention, but also a case of the Bush Administration being *pressurised, nervous, worried*, and even *fearful* between late-2003 and early 2008. It was a case of America losing *another* war and leaving another Vietnam behind; a war with *worse* consequences than the Vietnam War, because, as Bush thought, in Iraq AQ (with about 10,000 operatives, compared to a few hundred in Afghanistan) would be left in control of a country with vast oil reserves and pose a serious threat of further attacks on the US, and further embolden Iran in pursuit of nuclear weapons.<sup>156</sup> It was true that the situation had deteriorated in Afghanistan in 2006, but not to the extent it had done in Iraq. In Afghanistan the south and east were insecure, but the Afghan Government was strong enough to manage the insurgency. But the Iraqi Government could not, and therefore, as Rumsfeld and Bush as well as Gates admitted, the entire focus was on finding a

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<sup>153</sup> 'Troops Levels in the Afghan and Iraq Wars, FY2001-FY2012: Cost and Other Potential Issues', *Congressional Research Services*, July 2, 2009, <<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R40682.pdf>>; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., pp. 9, 94, 156-157; Tanner, op. cit., pp. 327, 333; Rashid, op. cit., p. 182; Jones, op. cit., pp. 128, 245; Rohde and Sanger, op. cit.

<sup>154</sup> 'The Good War, Still to Be Won', *The New York Times*, August 20, 2007; Gates, op. cit., p. 200.

<sup>155</sup> Shanker and Myers, op. cit.; Gates, op. cit., pp. 200, 202-203.

<sup>156</sup> Bush, op. cit., pp. 359, 367; Cheney, op. cit., p. 444; Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 694; Bush, George W, Address to the Nation on Iraq, January 10, 2007, <[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

solution to the Iraq War in 2006 and 2007.<sup>157</sup> With pressure from the media, Congress, especially when the Democrat-led Congress using the war as a *political* weapon to hurt the Republicans for the incoming presidential election in 2008, and with *deeply* concerned state of mind, could the policymakers manage to focus on 'the other war', too? The answer was a qualified No because in Iraq the US credibility was at stake. It was simply a case of winning or losing. The whole world was watching the Bush Administration 'losing' in Iraq. Iraq was constantly on the news, whereas Afghanistan was not, and therefore, led the agenda in the NSC at the expense of the Afghanistan War.

While by 2008, many members of Congress, the media, former officials, and area experts were of the opinion that the administration had not achieved the goals in Afghanistan *because* the Iraq War 'siphoned off' most of the resources, attention and manpower that should have gone to Afghanistan,<sup>158</sup> Bush and Rumsfeld did not, however, believe that the Iraq War had any impact on the Afghanistan War. For Bush, Cheney and Rumsfeld it was due to multiple causes, including Afghanistan's inborn characteristics (geography, history, tribal society, and extreme poverty), production of heroin, failures in the multilateral approach, NATO states' adoption of 'caveats', lack of resources by NATO states, lack of effective governance and corruption (for Rumsfeld, the failures by other US institutions, notably the State Department, to carry out their responsibilities), and finally, 'and most importantly', a double game played by Pakistan.<sup>159</sup> All of the factors the policymakers cite are, nevertheless, the result of their own unthought-out policy that was based on mistaken assumptions. And due to the Iraq War, the Bush Administration could not do a great deal once it realised its assumptions were mistaken. As seen above, one of them was in relation to Pakistan.

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<sup>157</sup> Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 691; Bush, op. cit., pp. 363-64; Gates, op. cit., pp. 25, 444.

<sup>158</sup> Rubin, Barnett R., and Ahmed Rashid, 'From Great Game to Grand Bargain: Ending Chaos in Afghanistan and Pakistan', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December, 2008,

<<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64604/barnett-r-rubin-and-ahmed-rashid/from-great-game-to-grand-bargain>>; Rubin, Barnett R. 'Still Ours to Lose: Afghanistan on the Brink', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, September 21, 2006,

<<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/RubinTestimony060921.pdf>>;

Seth Jones (2009), op. cit., pp. 220-221; Dobbins (2007), a testimony, op. cit.; McGurk, Christopher, 'Testimony of Christopher McGurk', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign relations*, April 23, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/McGurkTestimony090423a1.pdf>>; Eggen, Dan, 'Focus Is on Afghanistan As Bush Lays Out Plans', *The Washington Post*, September 10, 2008; Tanner, op. cit., p. 333; Rohde and Sanger, op. cit.; Clinton, op. cit., p. 131; Shanker and Myers, op. cit.

<sup>159</sup> Bush, op. cit., pp. 211-213; Cheney, op. cit., p. 499; Rumsfeld, op. cit., pp. 682, 685-688.

4.5.2. *The primary cause of the trouble in Afghanistan did not originate in Afghanistan, but it came from Pakistan.*<sup>160</sup>

Rashid gives an interesting account of how Musharraf and his Cabinet discussed the seven US demands made by Powell in September 2001.<sup>161</sup> In the meeting, the nine corps commanders, some of whom were said to have been supporting the Islamist fundamentalist parties and most of those were believed to be supporters of the Afghan TB, told Musharraf that US demands were unacceptable as the US offered nothing in return, and, moreover, there would be a negative domestic reaction by dumping the Taliban; the Kashmiris would particularly be disappointed in the military, thinking they might be next. Musharraf warned his commanders that if Pakistan did not cooperate, there would be serious consequences: India would step in and offer bases to the US military, and Pakistan would then face a hostile India allied with US military forces; Pakistan could be declared a terrorist state and become a target of the Bush Doctrines – the US could then target Pakistan's nuclear weapons from neighbouring Afghanistan; and the Kashmiri cause would seriously be jeopardised. In short, Pakistan would lose on all fronts and its very existence would be put in danger. It was not a case of bravery or cowardice, added Musharraf, but of protecting Pakistan's national security – defined by the military as keeping arch-enemy India at bay (including in Afghanistan); proliferating nuclear weapons; trying to either control or exercise pre-eminent power over the government in Kabul, both for Pakistan's own interests and to pre-empt new Pashtun threats to Pakistan's unity; and, to a lesser extent, especially in later years, dealing with threats from radical Islam within Pakistan.<sup>162</sup> This way, in Musharraf's opinion, at least they could still keep India at bay and there would be no danger to Pakistan's nuclear weapons. After seven hours of discussion, it was agreed to accept the seven US demands for the time being, but later the Pakistanis would express their private

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<sup>160</sup> Bush, op. cit., p. 212; Cheney, op. cit., p. 499; Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 688.

<sup>161</sup> Rashid, op. cit., pp. 28-31.

<sup>162</sup> Neumann, Ronald E., 'Hearing on Afghanistan: What is an Acceptable End-State, and How Do We Get There?', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 3, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/afghanistan-what-is-an-acceptable-end-state-and-how-do-we-get-there>>; Krepon, Michael, 'Assessing U.S. Policy and Its Limits in Pakistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 5, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/assessing-us-policy-and-its-limits-in-pakistan>>; Rashid, op. cit., p. 330; Krasner, Stephen D, 'Talking Tough to Pakistan; How to End Islamabad's Defiance', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2012, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136696/stephen-d-krasner/talking-tough-to-pakistan>>; Christophe, Jaffrelot, 'What engagement with Pakistan Can – And Can't – Do', *Foreign Affairs*, October 12, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136413/christophe-jaffrelot/what-engagement-with-pakistan-can-and-cant-do>>. According to Saikal, Pashtun nationalism is one important phenomenon that could cause the fragmentation of Pakistan, Saikal, Amin. 2014. *Zone of crisis: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Iraq*. London: I. B. Tauris, p. 3.

reservations and not necessarily accept all the demands. According to Rashid, Pakistan's policy was summed up in the phrase: 'First we say yes and later say but... [.]'<sup>163</sup> Musharraf had to come with this two-faced policy, since he could neither alienate his generals nor say no to the most powerful state in the world. Thus Musharraf's role in US Afghan policy was insincere and disingenuous from the start.<sup>164</sup> Musharraf then saw US Ambassador Wendy Chamberlin on the evening of the meeting and voiced his acceptance of the seven demands, but asked for US leniency, patience, understanding, support, and carefulness not to push Musharraf too hard because of the domestic fallout from his decision to stand by the US. The US, of course, initiated financial support in accordance with Pakistan's requests – which were the removal of all US sanctions, the forgiveness of \$3 billion US debts, the resumption of military supplies, and more loans from the US and the World Bank.<sup>165</sup>

The policy of not pushing Musharraf too hard inhibited the Bush Administration's robustness in dealing with Musharraf's two-faced policy and proved detrimental to the administration.<sup>166</sup> The Bush Administration refused to place conditions on its financial assistance and did not ask for the handover of TB commanders, since both policies were deemed to push Musharraf too hard. Instead of using US assistance to fight extremists, the Pakistani Army used it to strengthen its military capabilities, and assist the very TB that was fighting US forces; US financial assistance was used for killing US troops in Afghanistan.<sup>167</sup>

So it was damaging the continued refusal of the Bush Administration for many years to listen to the frustrated voices of Afghan, US and NATO officials from Afghanistan, who claimed that Pakistan provided active support for the TB. Bush believed in personal bonds, and since he had established one with Musharraf, he did not believe Musharraf would deceive him. Powell liked Musharraf and they were friends, and the former was not willing to buy the claims about Pakistan's secret support for TB. Rumsfeld did not want to put pressure on Musharraf because the latter could undermine the GWOT and the search for AQ in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Rice, Mullen, and Anne Patterson, Ambassador to Pakistan,

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<sup>163</sup> Rashid, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>164</sup> Markey, Daniel, 'A False Choice in Pakistan', *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2007, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/62648/daniel-markey/a-false-choice-in-pakistan>>; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

<sup>165</sup> Rashid, op. cit., pp. 29-31; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>166</sup> Jones (2009), op. cit., p. 101; Rohde and Sanger, op. cit.; Rashid, op. cit., pp. 118, 148-49, 241; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>167</sup> Singh, Robert. 2012. *Barrack Obama's post-American foreign policy: the limits of engagement*. London: Bloomsbury academic, p. 85; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 195.



called Pakistan a steadfast, historic and vital ally in the GWOT. Officials from the Pentagon thought of Pakistan as ‘part of the solution, not problem’. CENTCOM Combatant Commander General John Abizaid stated in Kabul, as late as August 2006, that he ‘absolutely does not believe’ that Pakistan was helping TB. Almost all of the above invoked Pakistan’s achievements of having captured a number of key Al-Qaeda leaders as a justification for Musharraf’s cooperation. In fact, in the presidential campaign of 2004, the Bush Administration would use Pakistan’s alliance as one of the greatest achievements of the GWOT.<sup>168</sup> Many in Congress seemed to be of the same view as the administration.<sup>169</sup>

By late-2005, however, divisions in the Bush Administration over Pakistan’s complicity on the GWOT in Afghanistan had begun to show – but almost *four* years were lost. Khalilzad revealed some of these rifts, consistently warning senior ‘colleagues’ in Washington, about the support and sanctuary provided to TB by the Pakistani military, particularly the ISI.<sup>170</sup> Karl Eikenberry, who became the Head of the Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan in 2005, admitted that he *eventually* became convinced of Pakistan’s complicity. In Washington, as Richard Armitage claimed, senior policymakers began to accept that the ISI supported the insurgency, but views differed as to whether senior officials from the Pakistani Government and military were too involved.<sup>171</sup>

Between 2006 and 2007, however, the Bush Administration gathered fairly solid evidence of senior-level complicity. The evidence proved that assistance to TB and other insurgents was provided by the ISI and the Army in a variety of forms: arranging sanctuary

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<sup>168</sup>Rubin, Barnett R. ‘Still Ours to Lose: Afghanistan on the Brink’, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, September 21, 2006, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/RubinTestimony060921.pdf>>; Ware, op. cit.; Mann (2004), op. cit., p. 275; Rice, Condoleezza, ‘Opening Remarks by Secretary of State-Designate Dr. Condoleezza Rice, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, January 18, 2005, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/secretary-of-state-nomination-part-i>>; Krasner, op. cit.; Patterson, Anne W. ‘Opening Statement For Senate Confirmation Hearing Of Ambassador Anne Patterson Senate Foreign Relations Committee’, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, June 20, 2007, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Patterson-Pakistan070613p.pdf>>; Cheney, op. cit., pp. 419, 500; Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 688; Jones (2009), op. cit., pp. 260-261, 266, 278; Rashid, op. cit., pp. 118, 236-241; Bush, George W., State of the Union Address to the 108th Congress, Second Session, January 20, 2004, <[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>169</sup> Lugar, Richard G., ‘Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Chairman Richard G. Lugar Opening Statement for Nomination Hearing’, *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, June 15, 2005, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/LugarStatement050615.pdf>>; Lugar, Richard G., ‘Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Chairman Richard G. Lugar Opening Statement for Nomination of Richard Boucher’, *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, February 16, 2006.

<sup>170</sup> Rohde and Sanger, op. cit.

<sup>171</sup> Ware, op. cit.; Jones (2009), op. cit., pp. 263, 265.

and training; supplying military, logistical, financial, and medical support; running factories (*madrassas*) to produce manpower; helping insurgents cross the border; aggressively collecting intelligence on the movement of Afghan and coalition forces in Eastern and Southern Afghanistan and then passing it on to the insurgents; planning military operations; helping the spread of propaganda; and keeping in regular contact with the Taliban leadership, including Mullah Omer, Jalaluddin Haqqani, his son, Siraj Haqqani, and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.<sup>172</sup>

A worried Bush told Musharraf of Pakistan's duplicity in spring 2006, but the latter refuted the allegations, reiterating that he was 'totally' cooperative with the US in the GWOT in Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>173</sup> But when the State Department provided targets for Pakistan, the accomplishment of which would have closed the sanctuary in Pakistan, Pakistan did not cooperate.<sup>174</sup> Moreover, numerous truces and arrangements that Musharraf made with Pakistani TB and tribal leaders, some of which were aimed at helping stop TB from recruiting members and infiltrating into Afghanistan, failed one after the other. After years, it became clear to Bush that 'Musharraf either would not or could not fulfil all his promises'.<sup>175</sup> For Bush, the Pakistani Army played a double game because it was obsessed with the threat coming from India, and the Afghan TB was part of the answer to that threat.

Successive Pakistani governments since 1975 kept the same strategic outlook that Afghanistan should be a proxy in the wider regional contest with India, and the problems the Islamic extremists posed to the stability of Pakistan should be counterbalanced by the geopolitical and strategic advantages they provided Pakistan with. For the Pakistani Army, the control over the land beyond the Sulaiman Mountains (Southern and Eastern Afghanistan), which would give them 'strategic depth' against India, was a vital national security issue; or else they would be left with their backs against the wall (Afghanistan) if and when India attacked Pakistan. Internal extremists, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (Let), could

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<sup>172</sup> BBC Documentaries. 2011. Secret Pakistan a Story of Double Game[the BBC] <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1kKEGRvG3E>>; Dobbins ( 2007), a testimony, op. cit.; Jones (2009), op. cit., pp. 265-7; Rashid, op. cit., p. 223; Tanner, op. cit., p. 335; Loyn, op. cit., p. xxxviii; Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 689; Rohde and Sanger, op. cit.

<sup>173</sup> Bush, op. cit., p. 215.

<sup>174</sup> Ware, op. cit.; Jones (2009), op. cit., pp. 265-267; Bush, op. cit., p. 215.

<sup>175</sup> Bush, op. cit., pp. 213-216; Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 689.



both provide manpower to the Afghan TB and be used against India in the Kashmir *jihad*.<sup>176</sup> Using extreme groups would therefore enable the ISI to have sufficient influence in the politics of Afghanistan and the region. In case Lashkar-e-Taiba or the Afghan TB went against the ISI's wishes, they would be intimidated or even disciplined militarily. The Afghan TB, therefore, provided Pakistan with a government in Afghanistan that the Pakistani Army had desired since the middle of the 1970s, because it was against India, Pashtun-dominated, and sufficiently religious but not nationalist enough to raise the issue of Pashtunistan. By September 10, 2001, ninety percent of Afghanistan was under the control of the Pakistan-backed TB. By many Western accounts, the remaining ten percent was predicted to be soon taken by them following the assassination of the charismatic and well-respected NA leader Ahmad Shah Massoud. But that did not happen as the Bush Administration allied themselves with the NA to oust TB. Pakistan's worries were not met when it pleaded with the Bush Administration not to rely heavily on the NA and not to let them take over Kabul. As explained in the previous section, Rumsfeld opposed it. Once the NA moved 6000 troops into Kabul, the ISI's 'worse nightmare' came true, and the ISI told the Pakistani media that Bush had double-crossed them, and that NA leaders were agents of India who were now in control of Kabul. The NA control of the government meant Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan, not to say in the region, was significantly reversed. Instead, India, Iran and Russia – all regional supporters of the NA, and all, especially India, Pakistan's regional competitors – consolidated their influence in the Karzai Administration.<sup>177</sup>

India by far was the obvious winner. It took full advantage of the victory by establishing a huge diplomatic presence in Kabul and another four major cities in Afghanistan. It provided massive aid programmes. But Musharraf claimed that the opening of numerous consulates in those Afghan cities closer to Pakistan had only one motivation: to interfere in Pakistan. The ISI accused the Afghan Government of providing the Indian secret agency, RAW, with access to Pakistan's western borders, and training and funding Baloch and Sindhi dissidents in Pakistan. As if Pakistan did not have enough on its plate, Bush, in 2006, to the abhorrence of Pakistan, offered India an agreement that ratified India's nuclear arsenal, giving India great power status. This was another slap in Pakistan's face, which further isolated Pakistan in the region. Thus, US intervention in Afghanistan had considerably

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<sup>176</sup> Loyn, op. cit., P. 261; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., pp. 16, 214.

<sup>177</sup> Tanner, op. cit., p. 302; Rashid, op. cit., pp. 30, 79, 87; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 96.

reduced Pakistan's influence in the region, particularly against its arch-rival, India. For Pakistan, the Indian threat was more important than its commitment to America. The ISI, therefore, once again started its support for the India-hating TB (which had successfully blocked the Indian presence for a decade) in order to regain its influence against India, Iran and Russia. Without the US realising it, Afghanistan had become another Kashmir – another battleground – between India and its regional allies (Russia, Iran and some Central Asian states) and Pakistan and its allies (Saudi Arabia and, to a lesser extent, China) who jockeyed for influence while the US and its NATO allies found themselves embroiled. The US-led war in Afghanistan, which began in September 2001, gradually transitioned into a regional struggle between the US and its allies and all the major countries in the region. The 'Great Game' was alive and well.<sup>178</sup>

The Iraq War had a major role to play in reviving the 'Great Game'. According to General David Barno, who commanded US forces between 2003 and 2005 in Afghanistan, the reason Pakistan increased its support to the insurgents was because the US, due to the Iraq War, was in the process of downsizing its troops in Afghanistan.<sup>179</sup> As the Bush Administration invaded Iraq, Pakistan turned its attention to Afghanistan – it had been long that Pakistan had been 'licking its wounds'.<sup>180</sup> As the Bush Administration got embroiled in Iraq by the end of 2003 and the Iraq War began to become unpopular, the Pakistani military started increasing its open secret interference to launch the 'perfect storm' in Afghanistan in 2005 and 2006. The Pakistani military must have known that the Bush Administration by then had squandered credibility at home and support abroad,<sup>181</sup> and was too financially, militarily, politically, and psychologically exhausted to engage in yet another war with Pakistan. This must have made them even more emboldened. The Iraq War diverted not only US money and manpower from Afghanistan, but also American attention from the central front: Pakistan.<sup>182</sup> Had the Bush Administration not been stuck in Iraq, it would have been able to keep a close eye on Pakistan's behaviour. Perhaps the need might never have

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<sup>178</sup> Rubin, Barnett R., 'Saving Afghanistan', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2007, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/62270/barnett-r-rubin/saving-afghanistan>>; Rubin and Rashid, op. cit.; Rashid, op. cit., pp. 229, 286, 290; Jones (2009), op. cit., pp. 271, 312; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., pp. 110, 214; Rohde and Sanger, op. cit.; Tanner, op. cit., p. 338.

<sup>179</sup> Jones (2009), op. cit., pp. 270-271.

<sup>180</sup> Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 110.

<sup>181</sup> Yingling, op. cit.

<sup>182</sup> Dobbins (2007), a testimony, op. cit.

arisen, since Pakistan would never have dared to create an obstacle to US Afghan policy if the Bush Administration still had its credibility *and* its 'resolve'.

As the situation became better in Iraq by the beginning of 2008, the Bush Administration turned its attention back to Afghanistan, and consequently approved orders that allowed US Special Operations Forces to carry out ground operations in Pakistan against TB and AQ, which were executed in South Waziristan in September 2008. In response, Pakistan's civilian government, its military, parliament, and media went ballistic, warning that such operations were in breach of Pakistan's sovereignty, and only Pakistan's armed forces had such a right. Bush, who by 2008 was *frustrated* with Pakistan's double game, and his policymakers seemed to be at a loss as to what to do with Pakistan. The US had exhausted all other means (political, diplomatic and financial), and the only option left (the military response) provoked such anger in Pakistan that it even 'alarmed' Bush.<sup>183</sup> The Administration could not even apply sanctions, since 75 percent of the NATO supplies were coming through Pakistan, and they would have weakened even more the already fragile Pakistani Government. In the worst scenario, as the policymakers thought, the civil government could collapse and instead the Pakistani TB or other radical Islamists would take over. A country with atomic powers and a population of roughly 185 million led by radical Islam would be the worst nightmare of any administration in America.<sup>184</sup> But at the same time the failure to deny the insurgents its safe haven in Pakistan had 'blocked strategic victory' in Afghanistan.<sup>185</sup> Pakistan's support for the insurgents meant that the US was fighting an enemy that could always be reinforced from open door tribal areas with more than half a million students in madrassas and 150 training camps and other facilities in which insurgents were trained and housed and sent to Afghanistan; until the TB-producing factories and the sanctuary were there, the likelihood of the US winning the war was zero.<sup>186</sup> US Commander in Afghanistan General McKiernan told Gates that if the US could find a way to take care of the safe haven in Pakistan, he 'would secure Afghanistan in six

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<sup>183</sup> Bush, op. cit., p. 217.

<sup>184</sup> Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 688.

<sup>185</sup> Clinton, op. cit., p. 175; Gates, op. cit., p. 217; Robin (2006), a testimony, op. cit.

<sup>186</sup> Dick, Luger, 'Opening Statement', 'Lugar Says Pakistan Must Adhere to Past Agreements to Fight Terrorism', *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 17, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/ranking/release/lugar-says-pakistan-must-adhere-to-past-agreements-to-fight-terrorism>>; Krasner, op. cit.; Singh, op. cit., pp. 77-78; Loyn, op. cit., pp. xxxviii, 306-8; Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 689; Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 1-4, 99-104, 216; Mann (2004), p. 87; Rubin (2006), a testimony, op. cit.

months'.<sup>187</sup> The commander had a point, as the insurgents crossed the border from the tribal areas with free will and attacked the Afghan and coalition forces: e.g. between June 20 and July 20, 2008, there were more than 60 insurgent attacks against Afghan and coalition forces along the Paktika and Khost border, 20 attacks along the Kunar and Nangarhar border with Pakistan's Bajaur, Mohmand and Khyber Agencies.

Pakistan's support for the insurgents meant the US was not only not winning strategically and militarily, but also losing diplomatically. Ahmed Wali Karzai, brother to President Karzai, told Rashid that the Bush Administration kept quiet about Pakistan's support of TB at the cost of destabilising Afghanistan. Wali added that most Afghans in Kandahar believed that the US secretly supported the ISI and wanted to hand over the Afghanistan's Pashtun belt to Pakistan.<sup>188</sup> Many Afghans believed that a few thousand TB were 'nothing to defeat' for a superpower such as the US; it could get rid of them in a very short period of time. But the US did not want to do this, as it pursued the strategy of 'divide and rule' in order to justify its strategically important presence in Afghanistan.<sup>189</sup> President Karzai was one of those Afghans who was convinced that the US wanted to weaken Afghanistan in order to create many small states in its place, and hence it (and the UK) radicalised the Pashtun.<sup>190</sup> US diplomacy equally suffered in Pakistan. Many Pakistanis, as well as Pakistani officials, believed that Britain and the US were supporting the Baloch insurgencies in order to counter the Chinese naval presence in Gwadar, seize Pakistan's nuclear weapons, and break up Pakistan.<sup>191</sup> Though such possibilities were far-fetched, they were widely believed by the Afghans and Pakistanis from all walks of life, significantly damaging the US standing among ordinary Afghans and Pakistanis. Afghans began to distrust America and its assistance towards Afghanistan, and began to lose hope once again.

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<sup>187</sup> Gates, op. cit., p. 217.

<sup>188</sup> Rashid, op. cit., p. 251.

<sup>189</sup> Baker, Kim, 'Letter From Kabul: Solving Afghanistan's Problems; What the United States Must Overcome in Afghanistan', *Foreign Affairs*, 2009, November 30, 2009, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/features/letters-from/letter-from-kabul-solving-afghanistans-problems>>; Joya, Malalai, and Derrick O'keefe. 2009. *A woman among warlords: the extraordinary story of an afghan who dared to raise her voice*. New York; scribner, pp. 233-253; Ansari, Basherahmed. 2005. *Afghanistan in the flames of oils and gas*. Bangah Intesharat Maiwand, Kabul; Rustayi, Aubdelmanan. 2006. *The wars of the Super Powers and the Oil Projects in Afghanistan*; Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 116-117.

<sup>190</sup> Full transcript of President Karzai's interview with Aryn Baker from Time Magazine.[Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. May 13, 2012.

<<http://president.gov.af/en/documents/category/interviews?page=2>>; Gates, op. cit., p. 559.

<sup>191</sup> Gates, op. cit., p. 477; Rashid, op. cit., pp. 251, 287; Woodward, op. cit., pp. 116-117.

The Bush Administration knew that the ISI had been actively spreading these theories in Afghanistan. The ISI were sending messages that Afghanistan was 'invaded' and therefore there was a call for religious duty, '*jihad*', upon *each* Afghan to defend his or her country against the US/the allies (or the '*kafirs*', the 'non-believers') and the Afghan Government (or 'the traitor'),<sup>192</sup> exactly the same message the CIA/ISI used to spread during the Soviet invasion. But the Bush Administration could not do anything since it was so deeply embroiled in Iraq, and even when the violence decreased in Iraq in late-2007, it was too late for the administration to find a solution, that is, if there was one. The Bush Administration had assumed that the US would be perceived in Afghanistan as 'liberator' not invader, and the Afghan Government would be welcomed by the Afghans as a 'democratic government'. But the ISI propaganda called it the government of the traitors/non-believers and it needed to be rooted out. It further persuaded Afghans to fight against the 'invasion' of Afghanistan by the US. Thus, Pakistani military propaganda refuted both of the above assumptions. To make matters worse, Afghanistan had been used by the administration as an example of the states that sponsored terrorism to change their behaviour. If not, Bush would not hesitate to use his doctrines. However, Pakistan's support for TB was now sending the opposite message: the US was stuck in Afghanistan (and of course in Iraq up to 2008) and could do *nothing*, so rogue countries could freely support terrorism and proliferate WMD. The Bush Administration had assumed that it wanted to 'fight smart', yet Pakistan's interference eventually forced the Obama Administration to deploy almost 200 times more troops than the Bush Administration had used to defeat TB/AQ in 2001. Yet another assumption, thanks to Pakistan's interference (as well as Iran and Syria's secret backing of the Iraqi insurgents) was thrown out of the window.

Pakistan's support of the insurgents not only cost the US the Afghanistan War, but also invalidated the Bush Doctrines. Pakistan's direct support for the insurgents in Afghanistan (and Iran's support of the Shia groups in Iraq) caused the deaths of thousands of US soldiers. This is something almost all the policymakers accepted publicly as a fact. Surely the Bush Doctrines, especially the 'no distinction' one, could have been just as applicable to both countries. Yet the Bush Administration did not take 'the fight overseas to the enemy', that is, the states supporting the terrorists – Pakistan, Iran, and, to a lesser extent, Syria – to

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<sup>192</sup> BBC Documentaries, op. cit.; Lyon, op. cit., p. 272.

defeat them to 'prevent' further harm to US citizens in both Afghanistan and Iraq. The Bush Administration (particularly Bush, who by now had experienced through the hard way how the international system worked, and how the bureaucracy in Washington, especially the pressure by Congress and the media, could make it difficult for a president to make bold FP decisions) eventually had to change its strong belief in American capabilities, especially in US military power. The policymakers knew they could no longer use its technologically advanced military to achieve their ambitious goal of eliminating terrorism worldwide. With roughly 150,000 troops in Iraq, and with all its 'soft powers', the US found itself unable to tackle the sectarian violence there. With around 60,000 US/NATO forces in Afghanistan, the US could not stabilise two provinces of Helmand and Kandahar. If America could not achieve stabilisation in two provinces, how on earth could it eliminate terrorism or states supporting terrorism or proliferating WMD worldwide? It could not because, by 2008, the two wars had weakened the Bush Administration financially, militarily, politically and psychologically, and thus the sense of 'whatever it takes' was gone. So were the Bush Doctrines over in reality, though rhetoric<sup>193</sup> still continued.<sup>194</sup>

4.5.3. *'Caveats deny me the ability to plan and prosecute...I can't amass them [troops] to where I might have a decisive point...Obviously I can't move as quickly as I want to.'* Gen. Dan McNeill, the NATO Commander in Afghanistan.<sup>195</sup>

Due to its aversion to nation-building and the preparations for the Iraq War, the Bush Administration, in the Tokyo Conference in 2002, handed over some of the responsibility of rebuilding the Afghan institutions to other states, assuming that these nations would shoulder the responsibility and the costs;<sup>196</sup> this became known as the 'lead nation' approach. Germany, however, seriously failed to fund and manage the training of the Afghan National Police (ANP). For example, it only sent 40 trainers to train 3,500 Afghan officers, forcing the State Department in the middle of 2003 to take over the responsibility. Since it did not have its own branch to train the police, it contracted DynCorp. DynCorp did not have the capacity to rebuild a broken police force from scratch in a tribal society, and

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<sup>193</sup> Bush, George W, Remarks on the Global War on Terror: The Enemy in Their Own Words, September 5, 2006,

<[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>194</sup> Gordon, op. cit.; Leffler, op. cit.

<sup>195</sup> Scott, Tyson, and Ann Josh White, 'Gates hits NATO Allies' Role in Afghanistan', *The Washington Post*, February 7, 2008.

<sup>196</sup> Tanner, op. cit., p. 333.

thus a frustrated Defense Department had to take over in 2006. In the course of nearly four years, ANP was handled by three different agencies, and by the time the Defense Department took over and ramped up efforts to rebuild, incalculable damage had been done. But even then the ANP continued to be 'ill-trained, poorly paid, under-equipped, and inadequately armed'.<sup>197</sup> For a year or so the Italians, who were responsible for rebuilding the justice system, did not send a team of experts to Afghanistan to provide training to the members of the justice system, making the underperforming Germany look 'good'. The World Bank ranked the Afghanistan justice system between 2002 and 2006 in the top 2 percent of the most corrupt countries. In 2007, Afghanistan managed to get a place in the 99.5 percent of the 'most ineffective justice systems worldwide'.<sup>198</sup> The outcome of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) was as bad as the justice system. Japan and the UN only managed to disarm low-profile militia and did not succeed in disarming warlords and commanders.<sup>199</sup> The UK's plan to reduce the cultivation of the opium poppy by 70 percent by 2008 and by 100 percent by 2013 began to look like a 'cruel joke' when opium production rose from 185 tonnes in 2001 to 8200 tonnes in 2007, enabling Afghanistan to provide 93 percent of the world's opium, which brought \$4 billion into the Afghan economy, more than half of Afghanistan's total economy of \$7.5 billion for that year.<sup>200</sup> There was strong evidence to prove that TB largely benefited both financially and politically (in the latter case, by providing security for farming communities) from the illicit drug trade.<sup>201</sup> The US training of the Afghan National Army (ANA) was relatively successful compared to other areas. However, due to the intertwinement of the five pillars, failures in one neighbouring area meant failures in the others.

The policymakers had incorrectly assumed that these countries would effectively shoulder their responsibility. When the Bush Administration itself was not interested in rebuilding the key institutions, other states obviously would not fully commit. It was a US war and the US should have handled it effectively. But, as an anonymous senior White

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<sup>197</sup> Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 122; Jones (2009), op. cit., pp. 173, 242; Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 685.

<sup>198</sup> Jones (2009), op. cit., pp. 241-242; Rashid, op. cit., p. 204.

<sup>199</sup> Bird and Marshall, op. cit., pp. 129-130.

<sup>200</sup> Scott, Peter Dale. 2010. *American war machine: deep politics, the CIA global drug connection, and the road to Afghanistan*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, p. 226; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., pp. 13, 125.

<sup>201</sup> Jones, James L., 'Oral Statement of General James L. Jones, USMC, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, September 21, 2006, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/JonesTestimony060921.pdf>>

House official admitted in retrospect, 'We piecemealed it...One of the problems is when everybody has a piece, everybody's piece is made third and fourth priority. Nobody's piece is first priority. Stuff didn't get done.'<sup>202</sup> If the US had established effective ANA, ANP, and a legal system, villagers in the south and east might have been protected, and hence there would have been little support for TB, and law and order might not have collapsed.<sup>203</sup>

Handing over the responsibility to NATO in the middle of 2003 in order to minimise costs and avoid Afghanistan being a distraction to the next phases of the GWOT contributed further towards the worsening of security in Afghanistan. Like the presumptions regarding the lead nation approach, relying on NATO also proved to be mistaken, as NATO suffered from three factors: firstly, as the situation deteriorated, NATO did not have the counterterrorism and counter-insurgency capabilities (the necessary level of troops, military equipment and other resources) to defend the population from the insurgents; secondly, lack of cooperation/coordination between NATO and the US and the absence of unity of command, such as the one in Bosnia that oversaw reconstruction and stabilisation, meant that every country was operating in the same area with 'different missions and different rules of engagement'; lastly, and most importantly, some NATO states, such as Italy, Spain, France, and especially Germany refused, despite *constant* US pressure, to allow its troops in combat missions.<sup>204</sup> For them, as promised by the Bush Administration, the Afghanistan mission was a reconstruction project or peacekeeping mission, and that was what their parliaments (and in Germany's case, its constitution) and their populations had allowed them to pursue and hence their 'caveats' represented domestic realities.<sup>205</sup> Britain, Canada, Australia, Denmark, and The Netherlands, however, adopted no, or very few, formal caveats. For Bush, the outcome was 'a disorganized and ineffective force, with troops fighting by different rules and many not fighting at all'.<sup>206</sup> The adoption of caveats, the lack of equipment and the lack of unity of command strongly hamstrung the ability of NATO commanders (such as Gen. Dan McNeill in the quotation above) to make military plans to

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<sup>202</sup> Rohde and Sanger, op. cit.

<sup>203</sup> Jones (2009), op. cit.

<sup>204</sup> Shanker and Myers, op. cit.; Scott and Josh, op.cit.; Rashid, op. cit., pp. 350-352; Tanner, op. cit., p. 333; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., pp. 150, 155, 219; Jones (2009), op. cit., pp. 250-253; Gates, op. cit., p. 203; James Jones, op. cit.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Bush, op. cit., p. 211.



deal with an effective and adaptive enemy, especially as the latter escalated violence in 2007 and 2008.<sup>207</sup>

4.5.4. *'If some later contended that we never had a plan for full-fledged nation building or that we under-resource such a plan, they were certainly correct. We didn't go there to try to bring prosperity to every corner of Afghanistan. I believe...that such a goal would have amounted to a fool's errand.... [S]ending U.S. servicemen and -women in pursuit of an effort to remake Afghanistan into a prosperous American-style nation-state or to try to bring our standard of security to each of that nation's far-flung villages would be unwise, well beyond our capability, and unworthy of our troops' sacrifice.'*<sup>208</sup>

The small footprint aspect of the strategy, especially in the first two years, resulted in insufficient troop levels (1.6 troops per thousand Afghans compared to 19.3 per thousand in Kosovo, or 17.5 troops in Bosnia) and resources (\$60 per Afghan, compared to \$577 per inhabitant in Kosovo, or \$277 per inhabitant in Bosnia) in any post-conflict construction since World War Two (WWII). Even though there were increases in US aid in 2004 and then in 2007 (mainly for reconstruction purposes), it was still insufficient, as most of it was spent either on security-related areas, i.e. military training and drug eradication, or on humanitarian projects. The failure to build the nation,<sup>209</sup> particularly the implementation of an economic infrastructure – such as building roads, a water system and electricity – disappointed the Afghans and strengthened the insurgency. It had a more severe impact when Bush announced a 'Marshall Plan' – the military victory to be followed by a moral victory that would result in better lives for the Afghans – and did not deliver it. To make matters worse, US assistance was conditional on American goods and services (five times more expensive), and 95 percent of it was channelled through NGOs and other international organisations, thereby creating a parallel bureaucracy and inevitably weakening the Afghan Government.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Mann (2012), p. 123; Rashid, op. cit., p. 354; Tanner, op. cit., p. 342; Gates, op. cit., p. 215; Jones (2009), op. cit., p. 249.

<sup>208</sup> Rumsfeld, op. cit., p. 683.

<sup>209</sup> As had been promised by Bush: Bush, George W, Address to the United Nations General Assembly, November 10, 2001,

<[http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected\\_Speeches\\_George\\_W\\_Bush.pdf](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf)>

<sup>210</sup> Simon, Steven. 'Can the Right War Be Won? Defining American Interests in Afghanistan', *Council on Foreign Relations*, July/August, 2009, <<http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/can-right-war-won/p19765>>;

Gannon, Kathy, 'Afghanistan Unbound', *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2004,

<<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/59891/kathy-gannon/afghanistan-unbound>>; Dobbin (2007), a testimony, op. cit.; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., pp. 134-136; Maley, William. 2006. *Rescuing Afghanistan*, Hurst and Company, London, p. 65; Jones (2009), op. cit., pp. 115-122, 204; Tanner, op. cit., p. 323; Rashid, op. cit., pp. 74, 134, 177 182- 187, 195-205; 'The Good War, Still to Be Won', *The New York Times*, August 20, 2007; Lyon, op. cit., p. xxxviii; Rohde and Sanger, op. cit.; Khalilzad, Zalmay, 'Statement Ambassador and Special Presidential Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations',

While Afghanistan would not be as 'prosperous' as America, it at least required a sufficient number of troops to establish security. By limiting 'the size, geographical scope, and functions' of ISAF and by repudiating the need to engage US forces in peacekeeping, the administration allowed large parts of Afghanistan to remain without authority – parts that were eventually filled in by warlords and other criminals. Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, as well as Bush and Cheney, assumed that low-profile US presence supported by warlords would make the US come across as liberator rather than occupier. While Pakistan's interference did not allow for this characterisation, the warlords played a major role in the lack of security, the collapse of law and order, and the weakening of the Afghan Government by hampering the rebuilding of key institutions such as defence and interior, extorting money from ordinary Afghans, getting involved in the illegal drug trade/other criminalities such as land-grabbing, and establishing monopoly on revenues.<sup>211</sup> The warlord strategy distanced ordinary Afghans from the US, planting the seeds for more and more distrust.<sup>212</sup> To make matters worse, since there were fewer troops, the US relied more and more on aerial bombardment, resulting in more civilian killings. This caused another blow to the Bush Administration's effort to convince the Afghans that the US was there to help establish a peaceful Afghanistan.<sup>213</sup>

Thus almost every expert on Afghanistan – including many US officials, such as Bush, Cheney, Wolfowitz, four former US Ambassadors to Afghanistan, namely, Khalilzad, Robert P. Finn, Ronald E. Neumann, and Eikenberry – believed that the light footprint part of the strategy proved disastrous for Afghanistan.<sup>214</sup> Bush admitted that the light footprint strategy 'worked well at first. But in retrospect, our rapid success with low troop levels created false comfort, and our desire to maintain a light military footprint left us short of

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Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, June 7, 2005, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/KhalilzadTestimony050607.pdf>>; Jawad, op. cit.; Transcript of Interview by President Karzai with CBS Correspondent Lara Logan.[Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan].September 4, 2012.

<<http://president.gov.af/en/documents/category/interviews?page=2>>

<sup>211</sup> Rubin, op. cit.; *The Good War, Still to Be Won*, *The New York Times*, August 20, 2007; Loyn, op. cit., p. 271; Jones (2009), op. cit., p. 208; Rashid, op. cit., p. 323; Tanner, op. cit., p. 320.

<sup>212</sup> Gannon, op. cit.

<sup>213</sup> Transcript of Interview by President Karzai with Newsweek. [Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. January 3, 2012.

<<http://president.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/TranscriptofInterviewbyPresidentKarzaiwithNewsweek1012012201158906553325325.pdf>>

<sup>214</sup> Bush, op. cit., p. 207; Cheney, op. cit., p. 433; Gates, op. cit., pp. 115-116; Ware, op. cit.; ambassadors' views in Rohde and Sanger, op. cit.; Jones (2009), op. cit., p. 204.

the resources we needed. It would take several years for these shortcomings to become clear.<sup>215</sup> By the time they were clear – that is, by the time the administration realised that in stabilisation and reconstruction operations ‘transformational’ technology could not be a substitute for ‘manpower, money, and time’ – it was too late since by then the insurgents had strengthened, the rural population had not seen improvement in their material well-being, so had little incentive to risk their lives by standing against the insurgents,<sup>216</sup> and the administration was so embroiled in Iraq that it could not provide the necessary resources and troop levels to put things right.

#### **4.6. THE EVALUATION PHASE OF THE STRATEGY AND THE TILT TOWARDS A COIN-S – AND CONCLUDING REMARKS**

*4.6.1. ‘Afghanistan ‘is slipping toward failure. The Taliban is back, violence is up, drug production is booming and the Afghans are losing faith in their government. All the legs of strategy – security, counternarcotics efforts, reconstruction and governance – have gone wobbly. If we should have had a surge anywhere, it is Afghanistan.’<sup>217</sup>*

By 2007, and particularly 2008, criticism mounted by members of Congress, Democrats in particular – most notably Senators Obama, Clinton and Biden – the press, and area experts over the Bush Administration for its ‘failure’ in the Afghanistan War. They pointed towards the reports suggesting how the security situation had worsened, how the number of suicide bombings and improvised explosive devices had dramatically increased, how TB had established a parallel administration in some areas, how corrupt the Afghan Government had become, particularly the police and the judicial system, how drug production had risen, how poverty and unemployment were feeding insurgency, and how Afghans had been frustrated with the Afghan Government and the coalition forces’ inability to deal with insurgency. Instead of pursuing AQ and working on stabilising Afghanistan, something that had a direct link with US national security, the Bush Administration made its task much more complex by invading Iraq. Iraq was not the first line to battle international terrorism, the assessments maintained, but the borderlands of Afghanistan and Pakistan, in which the instigators of the GWOT (and the perpetrators of the 9/11 atrocities) still lived freely and posed a threat to the US and the allies in both Afghanistan and their own countries. The US

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<sup>215</sup> Bush, op. cit., p. 207.

<sup>216</sup> Dobbin (2007), a testimony, op. cit.

<sup>217</sup> Joe Biden’s evaluation of US Afghan strategy in 2008, in Biden Joe, ‘Afghanistan. Pakistan. Forgotten’, *The New York Times*, March 2, 2008.

invasion of Iraq helped not just to raise TB and AQ in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but also to weaken US allies in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. President Bush vowed not to repeat his father's mistake of abandoning Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, but he surprisingly made the same mistake (by Bush Senior) that facilitated the initial instability and the eventual takeover of Afghanistan by TB and AQ. There was a unique window of opportunity when there was goodwill for the international community to succeed, but this closed quickly when the Bush Junior Administration did not commit sufficient resources and military forces. The evaluation jointly concluded that the Iraq War, the miscalculations in the US Afghan strategy (the false assumptions discussed above, especially the light footprint strategy), and the incompetence of the administration sent the 'good' and 'necessary' war in Afghanistan off course, facilitating the conditions for AQ and TB to make a triumphant comeback in Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>218</sup>

There were some – including Joe Biden, General James Jones, Admiral Mike Mullen, and Rashid, among many others – who talked of a possible US strategic defeat in Afghanistan (a possible takeover by TB) and the border areas (the epicentre of terrorism), and warned the administration of the consequences of losing its anti-terrorism war: a significant rise in global terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and drug production; significant damage to US (and the UN and NATO) future power and prestige; and a possible disintegration of NATO.<sup>219</sup> However, the US could turn around the misfortune, the losing war, if it came up with 'a smarter strategy and a lot more attention and resources'.<sup>220</sup> A new or smart strategy in the environment of 2008 meant a COIN-S, which had just saved the US from 'failing' in Iraq. A COIN-S was seemingly what Obama and Clinton had in mind to apply in Afghanistan, provided they won the 2008 presidential election.

Indeed, the two wars had become a dominant issue for the 2008 presidential campaign, and the Obama and Clinton primary campaigns, and later Obama's presidential campaign,

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<sup>218</sup>Gardner, David. 'Bush to pull 8,000 U.S. troops out of Iraq and reveals plans for a 'quiet surge' in Afghanistan', *The Daily Mail*, September 9, 2008; Eggen, op. cit.; McGurk, op. cit.; Robin, op. cit.; Biden, op. cit.; 'A Conversation with Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. [Rush Transcript; Federal News Service]', *The Council on Foreign Relations*, February 25, 2008; The Good War, Still to Be Won', *The New York Times*, August 20, 2007; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 94; Carlotta, Gall and Jeff Zeleny, 'Obama's Visit Renews Focus on Afghanistan', *The New York Times*, July 20, 2008; Rohde and Sanger, op. cit.; Rashid, op. cit., p. xxxix; Tanner, op. cit., pp. 2, 321, 327; Jones (2009), op. cit., p. 208; Lyon, op. cit., p. 271; Gates, op. cit., p.197.

<sup>219</sup> Schmitt, Eric and Tom Shanker, 'Bush Administration Reviews Its Afghanistan Policy, Exposing Points of Contention' *The New York Times*, September 22, 2008; Rashid, op. cit., pp. XLII, xxxix; Biden, op. cit.; Rohde and Sanger, op. cit.

<sup>220</sup> James Jones, op. cit.; Rohde and Sanger, op. cit.; The Good War, Still to Be Won', *The New York Times*, August 20, 2007; Dobbin (2007), a testimony, op. cit.; Schmitt and Shanker, op. cit.; Jones (2009), op. cit.

made it the central part of their FP stance. They consistently told the Americans that the Bush Administration invaded Iraq (a 'bad' and 'reckless' decision) at the expense of the Afghanistan War (a 'good' and 'necessary' war). Both Clinton and Obama promised Americans that, if they won the election, they would withdraw troops from Iraq (the war of 'choice') and redeploy them to Afghanistan, the true front on the GWOT.<sup>221</sup> For Biden, if he and Obama won, they would even make good on Bush's Marshall Plan for Afghanistan. They would also, unlike Bush, show serious commitment towards Pakistan, as Musharraf supported the TB because Bush did not provide enough financial support to Pakistan.<sup>222</sup> All these promises were a clear sign that the COIN-S would be employed regardless of who won the incoming election.

Due to the domestic pressure by these three domestic actors (Congress, the media/press, and the area experts), President Bush, on September 9, 2008, announced the 'silent surge' for Afghanistan. He would bring home 8,000 troops from Iraq and more than half of them, about 5,000, would be redeployed to Afghanistan after the month he left office. Additionally, in November 2008, he would send to Afghanistan a marine battalion followed by a combat brigade to join the 31,000 US troops already in Afghanistan. All of these troops would take part in the 'silent surge'.<sup>223</sup> The administration officials told *The Washington Post* that the fifteen percent influx of troops laid the groundwork for more troops in the future,<sup>224</sup> adding that the surge was in response to senior leaders at the Pentagon who had been calling for months for more troops (following the Iraq surge, more troops in 2008 meant a COIN-S) in Afghanistan to combat the growing TB threat there, but the ongoing war in Iraq made such a commitment impossible. However, the declining

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<sup>221</sup> Seelye, Katharine Q., 'Clinton Talks About Stepping Up Effort in Afghanistan' *The New York Times*, February 29, 2008; Gardner, op. cit.; Gall and Zeleny, op. cit.; Biden, op. cit.; A Conversation with Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. [Rush Transcript; Federal News Service], *The Council on Foreign Relations*, February 25, 2008; Obama, Barack, Presidential Candidacy Announcement, February 10, 2007, <<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobamacandidacyforpresident.htm>>; Obama, Barack, Senate Speech on Iraq War After 4 Years, March 21, 2007, <<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobama/barackobamasenatefloorspeechoniraqwar4years.htm>>; Obama, Barack, New Hampshire Primary Concession Speech, January 8, 2008, <<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobama/barackobamanewhampshireconcessionspeech.htm>>; Obama, Barack, Policy Speech on Iraq at the Ronald Reagan Building, July 15, 2008, <<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobama/barackobamairaqwarreaganbuilding.htm>>

<sup>222</sup> Biden, op. cit.

<sup>223</sup> 'Bush: "Quiet Surge" of Troops Sent to Afghanistan', *Fox News*, September 9, 2008; Spillius, Alex, 'President Bush announces 'quiet surge' into Afghanistan', *The Telegraph*, 2008, September 8, 2008; Eggen, op. cit.; Gardner, op. cit.

<sup>224</sup> Eggen, op. cit.

violence in Iraq allowed for troops to be deployed to Afghanistan.<sup>225</sup> Like 2001, Afghanistan again became 'a front-burner issue' for Washington.<sup>226</sup>

Indeed, during the time Bush announced the silent surge, his top civilian and military aides were conducting numerous 'major new reviews' (by Rice, Petraeus, Mullen, David D. McKiernan, and senior NATO Military Commander, General Bantz J. Craddock) of the war strategy and overall mission in Afghanistan.<sup>227</sup> These reviews were to assess the fissures over the Afghan policy: what was the right number of troops in Afghanistan, how best to spend the billions of US dollars, and what was the best way to deal with the deteriorating situation in Pakistan? The main priority for these assessments was why the US was not winning in Afghanistan seven years after intervention. Certain anonymous White House officials revealed that in the last months of the Bush Administration there was 'a new urgency' to adjust the strategy 'to put the mission in Afghanistan on the right path' for the next president.<sup>228</sup> To do so, in addition to the above reviews, leading assessments on Afghanistan began in the last week of September 2008 within the White House with a series of high-level meetings. They were to provide Bush's senior advisors with a number of recommendations within two weeks. One of the issues the assessments were going to study was whether to increase the troop levels in Afghanistan and adopt a robust COIN-S. During this period, Gen. David D. McKiernan requested 15,000 combat and support troops beyond the 8,000 additional troops Bush had approved for deployment early in 2009.<sup>229</sup> Bush was going to approve it, but decided against it once the Obama team urged him to leave the decision for Obama.<sup>230</sup>

While Bush, Cheney and Gates wrote generally of those reviews on Afghanistan, they specifically mentioned a review by Douglas E. Lute, in which Lute called for 'a more robust counterinsurgency effort, including more troops and civilian resources in Afghanistan and closer cooperation with Pakistan to go after the extremists'.<sup>231</sup> Bush and Cheney added that after a NSC debate, and after Hadley checked with his counterpart General James Jones

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<sup>225</sup> Bush, op. cit., p. 218; Eggen, op. cit.

<sup>226</sup> Gates, op. cit., pp. 222-223; Eggen, op. cit.

<sup>227</sup> Barnes, Julian E., 'Urgent shift in works on Afghanistan', *Los Angeles Times*, December 28, 2008; Schmitt and Shanker, op. cit.; Bruno, Greg, 'Searching for an Afghan Strategy', *Council on Foreign Relations*, January 22, 2009; Gates, op. cit., pp. 222-223.

<sup>228</sup> Schmitt and Shanker, op. cit.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Gates, op. cit. pp. 222-223.

<sup>231</sup> Bush, op. cit., p. 218; Cheney, op. cit., pp. 500-501; Gates, op. cit., pp. 222-223; Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 40-44.

from the incoming administration, it was decided to quietly pass along the strictly classified report. It was up to the new administration, said Bush, to revise the report as they saw fit and then adopt it as their own.<sup>232</sup> Cheney, however, was surprised the following year to hear Obama's Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel claiming that the Bush Administration had left them with no plan. Referring to the Lute assessment, Cheney implied that the Bush Administration did leave Obama with a plan that required a COIN-S in Afghanistan.<sup>233</sup>

The announcement of the 'silent surge', Bush's willingness to approve the pending troops request by McKiernan, the appointment of COIN-S expert/author, Petraeus, as the Head of CENTCOM, Cheney's claim that *they* had a plan (a COIN-S) for Afghanistan but passed it to the Obama Administration, and the favourable domestic environment for the COIN-S in 2008 America (especially the calling of all official assessments and the three domestic actors, most notably the presidential candidates and Congress, for the application of the strategy in Afghanistan) were all indications that the Bush Administration, which had just successfully applied a COIN-S in Iraq against all the odds, was equally eager to apply the very strategy written by Petraeus in Afghanistan, had it had more time on its watch. While it did not have the time to apply the strategy, it at least moved in the direction of a COIN-S, marking the first step towards the second turning point in US Afghan strategy.

In summary, the influence of the policymakers' belief systems and images, their bureaucratic opposition and domestic influences were examined upon the decision to employ the CT-S. It was seen that the decision was consistent with the defence hawks and the neoconservatives' belief systems, and they consequently influenced the President to apply a CT-S instead of committing the US to nation-building or peacekeeping operations. Rumsfeld in particular was the driving force in the CT-S decision. He managed to be so because he had the unquestionable support of his old and trusted friend, Vice-President Cheney. The two found it easy to influence Bush because the latter had a 'transformational temperament' and considered himself a 'big player', and Rumsfeld and Cheney's hawkish views fitted well with Bush's personality and belief system (including the way he approached decision-making). The success of the Afghanistan mission by 2002 kept the domestic support for the administration as intact as it had been in the days after 9/11. Congress, the media, the area experts and the general public were all supportive of the

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<sup>232</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 40-44; Bush, op. cit., p. 218.

<sup>233</sup> Cheney, op. cit., p. 501.

GWOT to expand to tackle terrorism and other rogue states. This support equally strengthened the role of the Rumsfeld-Cheney and neoconservative circle at the expense of Powell. However, by the end of the Bush Administration's first term in office, especially by the middle of the second term, it became abundantly clear that the GWOT strategy, and its derivative, the CT-S, had been based on false assumptions and failed badly at the implementation and evaluation phases. This time, the failure of the strategy politically hurt the engineers of the strategy: Cheney, Rumsfeld and the neoconservatives. Their bureaucratic 'locations' were weakened, belief systems proved mistaken, and domestic actors (Congress, the media, the area experts, and the general American people) turned against them. Consequently, their sway with the President was lost. They could no longer influence decision-making, such as the decision relating to the Iraq surge. It was Rice, Gates, Hadley, and Petraeus who influenced Bush in the last years of his second term, and hence Bush tilted towards a COIN-S. Bush himself was the main subject of criticism by the domestic actors, and by 2008 he had squandered his political capital and blown his credibility; he seemed to no longer consider himself a big player.



## THE DECISION TO SURGE

### INTRODUCTION

On December 1, 2009, Obama announced the decision to deploy an additional 30,000 troops (+3,000 enablers) to Afghanistan as part of the Global War on Terror (GWOT), or what Obama later termed 'Countering Violent Extremism'. The decision was made following an extensive three-month review known as 'Af-Pak'. The review consisted of approximately ten sessions, discussing almost all aspects of the Af-Pak strategy from top to the bottom, sometimes even going into the very basics, e.g. why was the US in Afghanistan? Broadly speaking, the decision-making process that Obama as President followed for the decision to surge (and, to a certain extent, the decision to draw down in 2011) was as follows: he listened to policy suggestions, asked probing and detailed questions, went away, made the decision, and then informed his advisors what the decision was. Unlike President Bush, Obama's decision-making or 'operating' style was based on the 'multiple advocacy' model, which allowed all sides, including lower-rank US officials, to voice their contradicting viewpoints and arguments. Though he listened to all opposing policy opinions, he, however, 'centralised' policymaking in the White House; it was *him*, influenced by certain close aides, who made the ultimate decision to surge. The purpose of this chapter is to employ the Foreign Policy Decision-Making (FPDM) Approach to examine how the decision was formed, what independent variables influenced decision-making and the resulting decision, why and how they managed to do so, and what the end policy became.

The format chosen for this chapter is in the light of the decision-making process that Obama tended to follow. Section one spells out the conflicting policy suggestions made by the two opposing sides, namely, the Petraeus camp and the Biden camp. The Petraeus or

military camp argued for the employability of a counter-insurgency strategy (COIN-S) in Afghanistan, while the Biden camp told Obama that a counterterrorism-plus strategy (CT-plus-S) would work better. Both camps invoked a variety of arguments and assumptions to justify their respective policy suggestions before the President. It is crucial to cover these policy propositions in detail because, as far as Obama was concerned, they offered a new perspective to the Afghanistan War. In the light of these policy suggestions – and the assumptions they carried – Obama made the decision to surge, and, in effect, set out US policy towards Afghanistan for years to come. It is necessary to mention that these contradicting views also represented a public debate on the Afghanistan War. By the time of the decision to surge, public debate on the Afghanistan War was simmering. Congress conducted numerous hearings on whether to surge, and many Congressional members had developed strong views on the Afghanistan War. Think-tanks, the press, area experts and other influential actors extensively wrote about the war and, intentionally or unintentionally, sided with one of the camps. In fact, the two camps used outside actors to influence public opinion and the policymaking atmosphere in their respective favour. They did so by leaking documents and having their supporters in the media, Congress and think-tanks to lobby publicly for their strategy while the Af-Pak review was being conducted. The outside actors – through their publications, interviews and testimonies – were more involved in policymaking for the decision to surge than one would generally expect them to be, and therefore played an important part in shaping the discussion, or policy atmosphere, and eventually the outcome. So section one serves two objectives: it spells out the belief systems and images of the policymakers and their external supporters, as well as sheds some light on the public debate on the Afghanistan War itself in general and on the decision whether to surge in particular. It concludes that the Obama Administration, outside actors, and the public debate were sharply divided over the decision to surge.

Section two analyses the assumptions and counter-assumptions that the opposing camps' policy suggestions carried. Following the causal factor requirements of the FPDM Approach, section three analyses the influences of bureaucratic politics, personal characteristics of policymakers, and domestic influences upon the resulting decision. It spells out that the Obama Administration consisted of five groups: namely, the Biden group, the inner circle, the outsiders, the military or the Petraeus camp, and the President. Due to their close proximity to the President, the first two groups were much more bureaucratically

influential during the Af-Pak review compared to the military camp. As part of bureaucratic tension, consideration is given to clashing personalities between policymakers, especially between Petraeus/McChrystal and Obama/Biden, and between Obama and the outsiders, as well as to past animosity during the campaign among Clinton/Holbrooke and Obama/advisors. It is concluded that Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's support of the Petraeus camp's COIN-S forced Obama to approve the surge. However, the Biden camp, supported by the inner circle, managed to persuade Obama to apply limitations on the number and duration of troops and to narrow the goals. Belief systems of policymakers, particularly of Biden and his group (as well as the President and the inner circle) and the military leaders (supported by Gates and Clinton) clashed with each other over the questions of whether the COIN-S or CT-plus-S was suitable for Afghanistan, whether Iraq was the right template for Afghanistan, whether success was possible in Afghanistan due to Pakistan's support of TB and Afghanistan's inherent complexities, whether TB was a US enemy, and whether Afghanistan was strategically important to the US. Their divided belief systems equally forced Obama to aim for a compromise. Domestic influences, namely, divided public opinion and dire economic conditions (US mounting deficit, slowing economy, and higher unemployment rate), were causal factors that also forced Obama to make a decision to strike a happy medium.

While the above sections provide answers for the 'how' and 'why' questions (or cover the initiation and formation phases), section four, the concluding section, shines a light on the decision itself, trying to explain which group, if any, Obama listened to, and 'what' the end strategy became. It is concluded that the divide over the Afghanistan War forced Obama to form a decision that reached for a compromise: he gave the military almost the number they asked for, but for a limited period with limited objectives. However, as far as long-term US involvement was concerned, he listened to none but himself; he employed neither a COIN-S nor a CT-plus-S, but instead applied the escalate-then-exit strategy. The decision was more in line with Obama's belief system: to bring a responsible end to the Afghanistan War by beginning to transition security in July 2011 to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Had it not been for Petraeus and McChrystal's bureaucratic muscle (strengthened by Gates and Clinton), and divided public opinion, Obama would only have approved 5,000 to 10,000 enablers to train and assist the ANSF, who could do the fighting. It may be summed up that bureaucratic politics, conflicting belief systems and images, and

domestic influences (the split public opinion and US dire economic conditions) shaped the end strategy, which could not guarantee success because of its limitations.

## **5.1. THE PUBLIC DEBATE AND THE OPPOSING BELIEF SYSTEMS AND IMAGES**

### ***5.1.1. The Divided Public Opinion***

In 2009, after Obama announced an end to the war of 'choice' and approved the deployment of 21,000 (17,000 + 4,000) US troops in February, little was written and talked about Iraq because now the 'war of necessity' took the centre stage. Obama found that his members of the War Cabinet, Congress, the press, the area experts, and the general public were divided on whether to approve McChrystal's request for 40,000, or four brigades with enablers, to conduct 'classic counterinsurgency operations'. The Petraeus camp – namely, Secretary of Defense Gates, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Michael Mullen, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the newly appointed US Commander in Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal, and, of course, the Head of US Central Command General David Petraeus – urged Obama to honour McChrystal's requests. But the Biden group or camp – namely, National Security Advisor to the Vice-President Antony J. Blinken, Senior Advisor and Coordinator for Afghanistan-Pakistan Douglas E. Lute, Deputy National Security Advisor Thomas E. Donilon, and Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism John O. Brennan – advised Obama not to. Incidentally, Obama had a small team of advisors within the White House who constituted his 'inner circle'. The team included National Security Council Chief of Staff Denis McDonough, National Security Council Chief of Staff (until October 2, 2009) Denis Mark W. Lippert, Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications Benjamin Rhodes, Donilon, White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel, Senior Advisors to the President Peter Rouse, Bill Daley and David M. Axelrod, as well as White House Press Secretary Robert L. Gibbs. Generally speaking, most members of the inner circle, if not all, had similar views to those of Biden (explained and referenced in the next subsection). Since Biden was Vice-President and had a wealth of experience in FP, the group often let him speak for all those in the Af-Pak review.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. 2012. *Little America: the war for Afghanistan*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p. 118.

Like the Biden camp, the Democratic Party, generally speaking, opposed the escalation of US involvement in Afghanistan. The anti-war liberals, the grass roots of the Democratic Party, were against the Afghanistan War and asked Obama for a total withdrawal.<sup>2</sup> Though powerful Democrats – such as Senator Carl M. Levin from Michigan, the Chairman of the *Senate Committee on Armed Services*, Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, John Kerry, the Chairman of the *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, and Representative Jim McGovern, Democrat of Massachusetts, – did not ask for US withdrawal, they publicly disagreed with McChrystal's planned COIN-S for similar reasons that the Biden camp argued (fully explained in the next subsection). Their main concern was the financial 'costs' of the strategy at a time when the US had economic difficulties, warning Obama that relying on the Democrats alone would not be a guarantee to pass the financing for the expensive strategy.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Obama was pressed by numerous Republican Senators, who still badly wanted a US 'victory' in Afghanistan, to approve the military requests for resources and troops. Some well-known Republican Senators – including John McCain, Lindsey Graham, Joseph I. Lieberman, and Representative Eric Cantor, Republican Minority Whip – not just supported the military camp, but repeatedly and publicly warned that, if Obama failed to send the 40,000, the US would fail.<sup>4</sup> Their media campaign was so aggressive that even Petraeus had to tell them to slow down.<sup>5</sup> Lindsey Graham privately told Emanuel, who was worried that Congress might not fund the surge troops, that if Obama approved the surge they would make sure the administration won the Republican support to pass the financing for the decision.<sup>6</sup> Chairman Kerry, on the other hand, tried to counterweigh against the heavyweight Republican Senators by equally writing opinion pieces in the press and giving opening statements at hearings he conducted

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<sup>2</sup>Mann, Jim. 2012. *The Obamians: the struggle inside the White House to redefine American power*. New York: Viking, pp. xx, xix, pp. 14-17.

<sup>3</sup>Tyson, Ann Scott. 'Mullen: More Troops 'Probably' Needed', *The Washington Post*, September 16, 2009; Barker, Peter, 'Obama to Weigh Buildup Option in Afghan War', *The New York Times*, August 31, 2009; Kane, Paul, 'Pelosi: Democrats facing voter 'unrest' over war spending, troop increase', *The Washington Post*, November 24, 2009; Kerry, John, 'Testing Afghanistan Assumptions; The Lesson of Vietnam is Don't Commit without a Clear Strategy', *The Wall Street Journal*, September 27, 2009.

<sup>4</sup>Graham, Lindsey, Joseph I. Lieberman and John McCain, 'Only Decisive Force Can Prevail in Afghanistan', *The Wall Street Journal*, September 13, 2009; Tyson, op. cit.; Woodward, Bob. 2010. *Obama's wars*. New York: Simon & Schuster, pp. 204-206; Baker, Peter, 'How Obama Came to Plan for 'Surge' in Afghanistan', *The New York Times*, December 5, 2009; Singh, Robert. 2012. *Barrack Obama's post-American foreign policy: the limits of engagement*. London: Bloomsbury academic, p. 74.

<sup>5</sup>Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 206.

<sup>6</sup>Baker (December 5, 2009), op. cit.; Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 298; Mann (2012), op. cit., p. 135.

at the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.<sup>7</sup> His media campaign made a fair share of the contribution to the public debate in favour of the Biden camp (and the President).

The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations played an important part in shaping the atmospheric environment for the decision to surge by inviting more than a dozen experts to join their hearings on Afghanistan. Stephen Biddle, John Nagl, Peter Bergen, Ryan C. Crocker, and to a lesser extent, Clare Lockhart, John Craddock, and Khaled Hosseini, supported Petraeus's arguments, while Rory Stewart, Steve Coll, Milton Bearden, Maleeha Lodhi, and Marc Sageman found their arguments consistent with the Biden camp (elaborated and referenced in the next subsection). It was not just experts who gave testimonies who found themselves on the two sides of the horizon, but also other outside actors. Their contribution through writing influential articles and textbooks further split public opinion. Those who found their views compatible with the military camp, some by coincidence and others by design, included Barbara Elias, Kim Baker, James Dobbins, Max Boot, William Kristol, Frederick W. Kagan, Erin M. Simpson, Clinton Douglas, Seth Jones, David Kilcullen, Michael Gerson, Mark Mayor, Fotini Christia, Michael Samples, and Lewis Sorley. Those who supported the Biden camp, intentionally or by coincidence, included George Will, Andrew J. Bacevich, journalist and expert Rory Stewart, Thomas H. Johnson, Steven Simon, Milton Bearden, David Ignatius, John Mueller, and Gordon M. Goldstein. The arguments put forward by Biden and Petraeus were consistent with the arguments put forward by the abovementioned experts, those who gave testimonies to the Senate and those who wrote influential articles in the press and other foreign policy journals. At times,

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<sup>7</sup>Kerry, John F., 'U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Chairman John F. Kerry Opening Statement for Hearing on Afghanistan's Impact On Pakistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, October 1, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/KerryStatement091001a.pdf>>; Kerry, 'Opening Statement', 'Chairman Kerry Welcomes President Obama's New Strategy for Afghanistan-Pakistan', *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, March 27, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/chair/release/chairman-kerry-welcomes-president-obamas-new-strategy-for-afghanistan-pakistan>>; Kerry, 'Excerpts From Senator John Kerry's Speech on Afghanistan', *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, October 26, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/chair/release/excerpts-from-senator-john-kerrys-speech-on-afghanistan>>; Kerry, 'Chairman Kerry opening statement at hearing on Strategy For Afghanistan, September 16, 2009, *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/KerryStatement090916p.pdf>>; Kerry, 'Chairman Kerry Opening Statement At Hearing With Secretary Clinton, Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen', *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, December 3, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/KerryStatement091203a1.pdf>>; Kerry, 'Opening Statement', 'Chairman Kerry: Pakistan is the core of our challenge', December 9, 2009, *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/chair/release/chairman-kerry-pakistan-is-the-core-of-our-challenge>>

it was difficult to distinguish whether a particular view was initiated by Petraeus or Michael Gerson, or by Biden or David Ignatius. Due to the public and adversarial nature of the Af-Pak review and the controversial aspect of the Afghanistan War, both camps used outside actors to maximum effect to weaken each other's policy suggestions in front of the President, thus contributing to the split in public opinion. In many cases, however, it was clear that views of certain experts influenced the viewpoints of the policymakers. It was Kagan's article<sup>8</sup> that convinced Gates that the US, like the Soviet Union, would not be seen by Afghans as an occupier since the COIN-S was designed to protect Afghans but the Soviets were killing them.<sup>9</sup> It was George Will's article<sup>10</sup> that strengthened Biden's conviction that the US was heading towards another Vietnam in Afghanistan. It was Gordon M. Goldstein's book, *Lessons in Disaster: McGeorge Bundy and the Path to War in Vietnam*, which the President and most of the policymakers had read, that provoked the Biden camp to question every assumption made by the military, as Presidents Kennedy and Johnson had failed to do in relation to the Vietnam War.<sup>11</sup> The outside actors, therefore, contributed a great deal in forming the public debate and consequently shaping the policy.

Like the policymakers, Congressional members, and experts, the American public were equally split on troop increase. A poll by *ABC News/The Washington Post* stated that 49 percent did not approve additional troops, while 47 percent did.<sup>12</sup> The Afghanistan War (and the Iraq War), as admitted by Obama (and Gates), had 'left our unity on national security issues in tatters, and created a highly polarized and partisan backdrop for' their effort to fight terrorism.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Frederick, Kagan, 'We're Not the Soviets in Afghanistan; and 2009 isn't 1979', *Weekly Standard*, August 21, 2009, <<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/016/854qadbb.asp>>

<sup>9</sup> Gates, Robert M., 'A Balanced Strategy; Reprogramming the Pentagon for A New Age', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2009, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63717/robert-m-gates/a-balanced-strategy>>; Gates, Robert Michael. 2014. *Duty: memoirs of a Secretary at war*, p. 360; Kaplan, Fred, 'The End of the Age of Petraeus; The Rise and Fall of Counterinsurgency', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2013, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138459/fred-kaplan/the-end-of-the-age-of-petraeus>>

<sup>10</sup> Will, George. F. 'Time to Get Out of Afghanistan', *The Washington Post*, September 01, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Baker (December 5, 2009), op. cit.; Mann (2012), op. cit.

<sup>12</sup> Langer, Gary, 'Exclusive: Obama's Numbers Plummet on Afghanistan War Worries', *ABC News*, 2009, October 21, 2009, <<http://abcnews.go.com/PollingUnit/Politics/afghanistan-abc-news-washington-post-poll/story?id=8872471>>; Balz, Dan and Jon Cohen, 'U.S. deeply split on troop increase for Afghanistan war', *The Washington Post*, October 21, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Obama, Barack. [2009]. Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan.[The White House]. <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan>>; Gates, op. cit., p. 369.

Such was the division over the decision to surge among the policymakers, Congress, the area experts and the general American public. This ‘highly polarized’ environment made it very difficult for Obama to make a decision, putting him in a real dilemma, since most of his advisors and the members of his Democratic Party (not to say ‘49 percent’ of the Americans) did not support the expansion of the Afghanistan War, but the military and the Republicans (and ‘47 percent’ of the public) were emphatic in their request to expand the war. If he increased troops, he was going to lose the support from the Democrats; if not, he was going to alienate Republicans and many independents. So his decision carried a significant political risk whichever way his decision weighed in.<sup>14</sup> While sections three and four deal with how Obama responded to this divide in public opinion, the subsection below covers the arguments (or their viewpoints) the two camps and their supporters put forward to justify their belief systems, the arguments that formed the grounds for the split in public opinion.

#### *5.1.2. The Opposing Arguments by the Two Camps*

Biden, his group members and their supporters invoked what this thesis calls the ‘Afghanistan-having-minimal-relevance-to-US-national-security-interests’, ‘missing-prerequisites-of-COIN-S’, ‘three-Pakistan-related-problems’, and ‘Afghanistan-another-graveyard-another-Vietnam’ arguments for their opposition. These arguments are as follows. TB did not constitute an enemy because they were not connected to AQ, would not allow AQ to return to a TB-led Afghanistan, given the fact that AQ carried a real security threat to Afghanistan, and only fought US forces because the latter *were* present in Afghanistan or else TB had an inward/national outlook. Moreover, intelligence reports suggested that AQ operatives were not in Afghanistan but in Pakistan, and would not return from their safety of Pakistan to a hazardous Afghanistan, where the US had numerous bases and freely conducted operations. Afghanistan therefore was not as important as the military was trying to portray it, and the US did not have to employ the expensive COIN-S to defeat those insurgents who were not an enemy, and whose defeat would not be essential to the defeat of AQ. The strategy would further compel the US to overlook other domestic and international interests – and threats. The US received AQ threats not just from Afghanistan but also from other countries such as Yemen and Somalia, so the US should see Afghanistan in the global context and understand that it could not afford, politically and financially, to

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<sup>14</sup> Langer, op. cit.; Balz and Cohen, op. cit.; Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 175, 311.



respond with a COIN-S to every country with the presence of AQ. To those, such as George W. Bush, Hillary Clinton and the few others,<sup>15</sup> who argued that the US had a moral duty to stabilise Afghanistan, the Biden group questioned how much treasure and lives the US needed to sacrifice to bring about such an Afghanistan.

The Biden camp opposed the COIN-S not only for being expensive, but also for not being the right strategy for Afghanistan. A COIN-S required competent and effective indigenous security forces as well as good and reliable government to take over the responsibility (*hold* and *build*) once an area was *cleared* by US forces. The security forces would establish security and a competent government would quickly, honestly, and effectively provide basic services to win over the population. Pointing to a number of shortcomings within both the Afghan Government (pervasive corruption, criminality, lack of a political class, lack of a strong, able and cooperative president, failing to reach all parts of Afghanistan, and limited revenue base) and ANSF (illiteracy, drug addiction, the presence of 'ghost forces, high attrition rate, lack of representation), these two important prerequisites of a COIN-S, essential for bringing a COIN-S's ultimate goal, security, and for *transferring* responsibility to the Afghans, were missing in Afghanistan, and building both was a slow process that required years (not the 19-month period proposed by the military) of training. More troops would only deepen the dependency on US forces by the ANSF. Secondly, a successful COIN-S, according to Petraeus's own COIN-S manual and studies conducted by the RAND Corporation, required one counter-insurgent for every 50 Afghans, but even if Obama approved the 40,000 troops, the military leaders would not have anywhere near 600,000 counter-insurgents for about 30 million Afghans. The military's counterargument, that the 600,000 number was not required (though a robust build-up of the ANSF would help McChrystal to reach the right number) because McChrystal's COIN operations focused on certain provinces in the south and east (as, according to the military leaders, provinces in the rest of the country, especially in the North, were peaceful), was flawed since insurgents, as rational strategists, would either go underground for the duration US troops were there, or relocate themselves to places or provinces where there were no or fewer coalition and

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<sup>15</sup>Crowley, Michael, 'Hawk Down', *New Republic*, September 24, 2009, <<http://www.newrepublic.com/article/politics/hawk-down>>; Jones, Seth G. 2009. *In the graveyard of empires: America's war in Afghanistan*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co; Lemmon, Gayle Tzemach, 'What Leaving Afghanistan Will Cost; Parsing the President's War Promises', *Foreign Affairs*, May 9, 2012, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137621/gayle-tzemach-lemmon/what-leaving-afghanistan-will-cost>>

US forces. If this happened, would the military be able to establish security? Would the military then not be asking for more US troops? Thirdly, a successful COIN-S required a duration of 10 to 14 years, but given that the US had been in Afghanistan for more than seven years, it was politically, financially, and practically impossible to sustain a heavy footprint for ten more years. Fourthly, a COIN-S worked in the urban Iraq but *not* in the rural, landlocked, mountainous, vast Afghanistan with numerous inherent complexities: having a different mix of population divided by factionalism; suffering deeply from poverty, unemployment, the illegal narcotic trade and three decades of civil war; having an insurgency (TB) that was *indigenous* and from the *largest* ethnic group; and sharing 2,500 miles of *porous* border with Pakistan (which worried the Biden camp the most, especially when none of the requested troops were going to be placed there). According to the COIN-S expert, the French David Galula (referenced below), these were all conditions that worked against a COIN-S.

The 'three-Pakistan-related-problems' argument was the most concerning as far as Pakistan's role in relation to the employability of a COIN-S in Afghanistan was concerned. Firstly, the projected COIN-S did not extend beyond the Afghanistan borders to the sanctuaries in Pakistan, and so, as long as the terrorist safe havens in Pakistan remained, where TB rested and rearmed and then crossed into Afghanistan, it did not matter how many troops the US deployed to Afghanistan because an end to the insurgency would not be brought. Secondly, Pakistan held the key to ending the conflict in Afghanistan, and US Afghan policy was against the interests of Pakistan in Afghanistan, as it aimed at creating a unified Afghan government which was sympathetic to India, Pakistan's mortal enemy, and at wiping out TB, the very forces supported by Pakistan for its geopolitical interests in the region. By proposing a COIN-S, the military leaders were not only ignoring Pakistan's concerns, such as the increasing India influence in Afghanistan, but also even further undermining Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan and the region. Pakistan, of course, would not allow this to happen, and would increase its support for the insurgency in Afghanistan and exploit even further the ideology of religious resistance that the West had fostered during the Soviet invasion. Therefore, no matter how many US troops fought in Afghanistan, an end to the insurgency was impossible if Pakistan continued (and it would) to support the insurgency in Afghanistan. Thirdly, Pakistan, situated at the crossroad of a strategic region (bordering Afghanistan, China, India and Iran – all important to the US in different ways),

had a population six times greater than Afghanistan, possessed nuclear weapons, most of the AQ operatives and almost all TB top members (the hardcore and the irreconcilable) had their camps in Pakistan, and was politically unstable. For all of the above factors, stability in Pakistan was considered the primary US objective, yet the surge was detrimental to that particular objective in two ways. First, the intensification of war could make it worse for Pakistan, as it could cause more influx of militants and Afghan refugees into Pakistan,<sup>16</sup> make more vulnerable the US-NATO ground supply route that the Pakistani Army safeguarded, undermine the present fragile political consensus in Pakistan to fight the insurgents, and further strengthen Islamic groups against the Pakistani Government, as the former would use Pakistan's cooperation (the proposed COIN-S required even more) as a reason to continue to fight against Pakistan's government. Most, if not all, of Pakistan's civilian and military officials argued that US presence in Afghanistan united the Pashtun on both sides of the line, and thus strengthened Pashtun nationalism in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pashtuns from both sides of the Durand Line joined the Afghan and Pakistani TB to fight against the US and coalition forces and their 'puppets', the Pakistani and Afghan governments. Pashtun nationalism in Pakistan was an issue that Pakistan was sensitive to, since it could result in its internal destabilisation, similar to the 1971 Bengali nationalistic uprising that resulted in the separation of East Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh. Second, the proposed COIN-S would further unbalance the allocation of resources in favour of Afghanistan, which at the time of the Af-Pak review, to the resentment of Pakistan, was 30:1. For the Biden camp, Afghanistan's most important relevance to US interests in the region was its proximity to Pakistan (and, of course, AQ, which was mostly located in Pakistan), and it was important to get Pakistan right or else the US would not win – the proposed COIN-S was sending the Af-Pak strategy more and more in the wrong direction. Biden strongly disagreed with the military assertion that stability in Afghanistan meant stability in Pakistan. If anything, it was the opposite. Consequently, even if the US sacrificed hundreds of billions of dollars and thousands of US lives for a COIN-S to stabilise Afghanistan (a big 'if'), it would not guarantee stability in Pakistan.

The Biden camp feared that the US would not ever be able to stabilise Afghanistan the way the military wished for. Instead Afghanistan was becoming another Vietnam for the US

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<sup>16</sup> Gates was told by Pakistani officials that 'Pakistan is the victim of the export of the Afghan Taliban', Gates, op. cit., p. 204.

because Afghanistan, like Vietnam, was incrementally sucking the US into an endless war. Moreover, using as evidence the appalling failures of past empires over 2,500 years in Afghanistan, most notably the Soviet Union and the British Empire, the Biden camp worried that the US would equally fail in Afghanistan. History showed that the twenty-eight million or so Pashtuns on the Pakistan's side, as well as the fifteen million Pashtuns on the Afghanistan side, would unite against a force that they deemed to be an invader, e.g. the Soviet Union. The US faced the same Pashtun insurgency that the Soviets had faced in the 1980s, and if the US could not succeed with tens of thousands of troops on the ground, it would not with more – more troops would simply prolong failure. Given this reality, some,<sup>17</sup> including the Democratic base in Congress, argued for a total withdrawal, but most believed it was wise for the US to apply a less expensive strategy, namely, the CT-plus-S. The 'CT' part of strategy would pursue AQ (if there was any) in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the 'plus' part would provide trainers to build up a moderate number of ANSF to retain security, and expand reconciliation to 'peel off some Taliban fighters'. The number of US/NATO forces present in Afghanistan would be sufficient to carry out the job until more ANSF were trained to take over responsibility for their country. A CT-plus-S was flexible enough to follow TB and AQ in Afghanistan, Pakistan or any other countries. It had the capability (since it was inexpensive and could therefore be sustained indefinitely) to eventually disseminate AQ leadership in Pakistan that would lead to the group's eventual defeat. It was able to defend US interests without having to commit to rebuild the war-shattered Afghanistan. It also had the potential to make it possible for US forces to secure a way out of Afghanistan in the near future.

These were the views of the Biden camp – namely, Biden, Donilon, Emanuel, Axelrod, Brennan, General James Cartwright, Douglas E. Lute, Eikenberry, and even Richard Holbrooke –<sup>18</sup> those who supported the camp in Congress, especially members of the

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<sup>17</sup> Will, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup>The views of the members of the Biden camp are found in the following sources: Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 40-44, 71, 102, 159-160, 162-163, 166, 167-170, 187-189, 190-191, 215-218, 221, 225-227, 237-238, 285, 297-298, 320-321, 334; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., pp. 118, 123-126; Singh, op. cit., pp. 67, 73; Bird, Tim and Alex Marshall. 2011. *Afghanistan: how the west lost its way*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 230-234, 237; Eikenberry Karl. W, 'US embassy cables: Karzai feared US intended to unseat him and weaken Afghanistan', *The Guardian*, July 07, 2009, <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/us-embassy-cables>>; Eikenberry, Karl, 'Statement Of Ambassador Karl Eikenberry Before The Senate Foreign Relations Committee', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relation*, December 9, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/EikenberryTestimony091209a1.pdf>>; Simon, Steven. 'Can the Right War Be Won? Defining American Interests in Afghanistan', *Council on Foreign Relations*,

Democratic Party,<sup>19</sup> the press,<sup>20</sup> and other outside actors or area experts, who either directly supported or found their belief systems consistent with the camp.<sup>21</sup>

The military and its supporters in Congress and media, on the other hand, emphasised what this thesis calls the 'Afghanistan-having-compelling-relevance-to-US-national-security-interests', 'multiple-anti-CT-plus-rationales', 'anti-three-Pakistan-related-problems', and 'Afghanistan-was-not-a-Vietnam-and-America-was-not-the-Soviet-Union' counterarguments. They were as follows. If the US retreated, or if the COIN-S was not approved, Afghanistan would slowly but surely fall into the hands of TB,<sup>22</sup> resulting in a US defeat with severe consequences: a destabilised Afghanistan would become a safe haven for AQ (whose members *would* return to Afghanistan and plot against the US and allies) and

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July/August, 2009, <<http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/can-right-war-won/p19765>>; Baker (December 5, 2009), op. cit.; Crowley, op. cit.; Mann (2012), op. cit., pp. 64, 131, 135; O'Hanlon, Michael, 'Staying Power: The U.S. Mission in Afghanistan Beyond 2011', *The Brookings Institution*, September/October, 2010, <<http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2010/08/25-afghanistan-ohanlon>>; Gates, op. cit., pp. 357, 362, 371-384; Clinton, Hillary Rodham. 2014. *Hard choices*. New York, N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, pp. 25, 129-149.

<sup>19</sup> Kerry, John F., 'Excerpts From Senator John Kerry's Speech on Afghanistan,' *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, October 26, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/chair/release/excerpts-from-senator-john-kerrys-speech-on-afghanistan>>; Kerry, 'Chairman Kerry opening statement at hearing on Strategy For Afghanistan, September 16, 2009, *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/KerryStatement090916p.pdf>>; Kerry, 'Testing Afghanistan Assumptions; The Lesson of Vietnam is Don't Commit without a Clear Strategy', *The Wall Street Journal*, September 27, 2009; Tyson, op. cit.; Barker (August 31, 2009) op. cit.; Kane, op. cit.; Lugar, Dick, 'Opening Statement for Hearing on Afghanistan's Impact on Pakistan', *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, October 1, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/LugarStatement091001a.pdf>>; Lugar, 'Opening Statement for Hearing on Afghanistan', December 9, 2009, *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/LugarStatement091209a.pdf>>

<sup>20</sup> Will, op. cit.; Ignatius, David, 'A Middle Way on Afghanistan', *The Washington Post*, September 2, 2009; 'Topic A: Is the War in Afghanistan Worth Fight?' *The Washington Post*, August 31, 2009; Tyson, op. cit.

<sup>21</sup> Crowley, op. cit.; (for conditions of the COIN-S) Simon, op. cit.; (for conditions of the COIN-S) Jones (2009), op. cit., pp. 151-161; (for prerequisites of the COIN-S) Galula, David, and John A. Nagl. 2006. *Counterinsurgency warfare theory and practice*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security International. <<http://library.dur.ac.uk/search~S1?/YGalula&searchscope=1&SORT=D/YGalula&searchscope=1&SORT=D&SUBKEY=Galula/1%2C2%2C2%2CE/frameset&FF=YGalula&searchscope=1&SORT=D&2%2C2%2C>>; Stewart, Rory, 'Testimony of Rory Stewart, Senate on Foreign Relations Committee Hearing', September 16, 2009, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/StewartTestimony090916p1.pdf>>; Mueller, John, 'How Dangerous Are the Taliban: Why Afghanistan is the Wrong War', *The Foreign Affairs*, April 15, 2009, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64932/john-mueller/how-dangerous-are-the-taliban>>; Bearden, Milton, 'Afghanistan's Impact on Pakistan', October 1, 2009, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relation*, October 1, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/afghanistans-impact-on-pakistan>>; Lodhi, Maleeha, 'Afghanistan's Impact on Pakistan', October 1, 2009, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relation*, October 1, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/afghanistans-impact-on-pakistan>>; Coll, Steve, 'Afghanistan's Impact on Pakistan', October 1, 2009, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relation*, October 1, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/afghanistans-impact-on-pakistan>>; Tanner, op. cit., p. 200.

<sup>22</sup> However, Biden did not think that a TB takeover would materialise with the presence of already 100,000 coalition and US forces in Afghanistan, Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 231; Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 299; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 210.

other terrorist groups; a destabilised Afghanistan would feed insecurity in the nuclear Pakistan that could result in a destabilised Pakistan, making it possible for AQ and other terrorist groups to topple the fragile Pakistani Government and obtain access to its nuclear weapons and a destabilised Afghanistan would lead towards instability and bloodshed in the region, Pakistan included, and terrorist groups would be able to significantly expand their numbers and the areas they controlled. The US would have no choice but to enter once again, this time, though, a less hospitable environment. To stop this from happening, and to prevent the future of NATO and US from being put in jeopardy, Afghanistan, the *only* country the US had a great deal of leverage to freely operate to target AQ forces in Pakistan, was strategically very important to the US, and, therefore, the resources the US were spending were worth it. It was inaccurate to compare Somalia and Yemen with Afghanistan and the tribal areas, because in the former countries AQ was not in close proximity to nuclear weapons. For the military leaders and their supporters, both AQ and TB were allies, impossible to separate, and therefore both constitute one enemy. AQ provided TB, especially the Haqqani network, with funding and other assistance – such as help with suicide bombing, improvised explosive devices, and propaganda techniques. AQ and other extremist groups in turn received safe haven, a training ground and other support from TB. Almost all extremist groups, AQ included, recognised Mullah Omer as their religious leader and they all had one ideology and purpose: to topple the governments in Pakistan, Afghanistan and the entire subcontinent and instead establish pure Islamic regimes. Therefore, one's winning would strengthen the other and one's victory would naturally be considered the victory of the other. Efforts to persuade them to join the national government would remain futile. The only way to bring out a healthy and effective state to the TB insurgency was to *defeat* them, even if it took more years. The only strategy that was capable of defeating TB and AQ was the proposed COIN-S, not the suggested CT-plus-S.

The military leaders told Obama that a CT-plus-S was a component of a COIN-S, and, without a COIN-S, a CT-plus-S was impossible, ineffective, incorrectly interpreted, useless, capable of creating more enemies than friends (or self-defeating), detrimental to Pakistan, and unable to provide security and thus reverse momentum. It was impossible because the US needed intelligence on AQ and TB leaders, both in Afghanistan *and* Pakistan, and without what Petraeus called 'enormous infrastructure' in Afghanistan, they were unable to acquire it, ineffective as US forces killed leaders in Iraq but the violence continued to intensify;

incorrectly interpreted by Biden to argue that a CT-plus-S required fewer troops – it could only come into motion with the existence of a COIN-S; a CT-plus-S by itself was useless, since it would neither remove sanctuaries in Afghanistan, nor prevent AQ from establishing bases in Afghanistan; a CT-plus-S alone was unworkable and short-sighted because it would not leave Afghanistan in a stable position (as it had not done in the past seven years), but offer endless killings to the Afghans, and thus had the potential to create more foes (terrorists) than friends; an intensified CT campaign could turn Pakistanis (and even the Afghans) against their government, making the collapse of the Pakistani Government possible. Then no drone programme would be able to save the situation; and, most importantly, a CT-plus-S was one of many pieces (improving governance, protecting the population, providing economic development) of a COIN-S, and it alone would fail to reverse momentum<sup>23</sup> because it did not address the factors that had caused the crisis of confidence among Afghans. Security or the protection of the ordinary Afghans, McChrystal's main objective, meant securing Afghans not just from increasing insurgency, but from all the evil forces, such as the tolerance of corruption, criminality and abuse of power by Afghan officials and other power brokers, a weak state, mistakes made by the coalition forces (including overreliance on aerial bombardments, collateral damage, lack of oversight on huge contracts that facilitated corruption, failures to deliver on promises, and lack of respect for the culture), and, *most importantly*, lack of resources. It was these evil forces that had caused insecurity, allowing the momentum to sway in the TB's favour. Petraeus and McChrystal told Obama what Petraeus had told President Bush: security was the foundation for all other progress. Without security, nothing could be improved. It would be impossible to achieve McChrystal's ends to train and increase the ANSF to 400,000 (the already 100,000 ANA to 240,000, and the 80,000 ANP to 160,000) to eventually take responsibility in their own country, improve governance, reduce corruption, and persuade TB to reconcile themselves with the Afghan Government – due to the lack of security, many of the TB reconciled were practically under house confinement in order to be protected from TB retaliation. The military leaders admitted that there were shortcomings within the

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<sup>23</sup> By momentum McChrystal meant 'momentum in the mind of the Afghan people': the confidence level among the ordinary Afghans in both the Afghan government and the international community was very low.

Afghan Government and the ANSF, but with the application of a COIN-S, both would be improved, as it did in Iraq *once* conditions changed.

It was further admitted by the Petraeus camp that the Pakistani safe havens were a problem, but once Afghans saw the benefits of a COIN-S (security and the betterment of the Afghan Government) the camps in Pakistan would lose their significance, since their support base in Afghanistan would evaporate; the Afghans would stand against those who fostered insecurity among them once they saw real improvement in security and governance. Pakistan would remain with no choice but to accept the Afghan Government and persuade TB to join it. Perchance, Petraeus and McChrystal had in mind how the support provided by Iran and Syria to the Iraq insurgency had become fruitless once the COIN-S began to show results. Iran and Syria both had to jump onto the winning train to have close relations with the Nouri al-Maliki Government; at least this way they exercised some influence. Secondly, Pakistan did not hold the key to the Afghan conflict. If the US established security, Pakistan's role (like the role of Iran in Iraq) would be minimised. However, for the military, Pakistani and US interests in Afghanistan were *not* incompatible – insurgency in Pakistan and Afghanistan was *equally* a serious threat to Pakistan's stability. That was what Chief General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani had recently told Petraeus. Kayani had added that Pakistan would not only cooperate with the US in Afghanistan, but also take action in the near future against AQ and its Pakistani associates in Swat and South Waziristan. A COIN-S in Afghanistan, the military leaders believed, would encourage/strengthen Pakistan to fight against a *common* enemy which posed a risk to both countries. Thirdly, a strong US presence in Afghanistan would ensure stability in the country, which would equally help Pakistan's security and stability. It would keep AQ and other insurgents in Pakistan, especially in its tribal areas, under severe pressure through CT operations (enabled through a large US footprint in Afghanistan), considerably reducing the chances of Pakistan getting sucked into a civil war or falling apart, or the Pakistani Government succumbing to Pakistani insurgents, or, worst of all, nuclear weapons getting into the hands of AQ and its followers. Stability in Afghanistan would also ensure Pakistan did not suffer from the blowback of terrorism and refugees. Thus the fate of Pakistan was linked to the fate of Afghanistan. Pakistan, however, was not as important as Afghanistan, since the war was all about gaining the initiative, and the military leaders were eager to gain the initiative on the ground in Afghanistan, the centre of conflict, where the fighting was happening. The only way to eventually defeat AQ



was to keep a strong presence in Afghanistan, as the US could not employ the strategy in Pakistan anyway due to Pakistan's negative view of the US, and the sheer impossibility of the applicability of the strategy in Pakistan: approximately 3.6 million counter-insurgents were required for Pakistan, compared to 600,000 for Afghanistan if a fully resourced COIN-S was applied. Therefore, if a COIN-S in Afghanistan meant more allocation of resources, so be it! Finally, Petraeus did not seem to be in agreement with the viewpoint that if the US did not get Pakistan right, it would fail no matter what it did in Afghanistan. The US did not get Iran or Syria right, yet it brought the Iraq War to a successful end.

The military camp was likewise *optimistic* that the US would not meet the same fate as the Soviet Union due to several factors: more than 90 percent of Afghans did not support a TB regime in Afghanistan, as the Afghans had seen TB's barbaric and repressive rule in the 1990s in which half of the Afghan population (women) were practically imprisoned, minority rights were infringed, and the country social, economic and political systems were shattered to pieces; more than two-thirds of Afghans supported the US presence in Afghanistan, as they understood that a lack of US presence would lead to either a civil war of the early 1990s, or a TB takeover of the late-1990s; the Soviet Union never used a COIN-S, and thus, instead of protecting the civil population, the Soviet Union barbarically and indiscriminately bombed villagers, killed or imprisoned its inhabitants, and, at the end, burned the entire place, thus leaving hardly any living species; US forces were equipped with weapons suitable for military theatres like Afghanistan, but the Soviet soldiers had not been; there were approximately 150,000 (some even claim 250,000) Mujahedeen fighting the Soviet Union and its puppet government in Kabul, but in 2009 the TB number was much smaller – 25,000 to 40,000, and, unlike the *jihad* era of 1980s, two-thirds of insurgents fought in order to survive or make a living, or were even forced to join the insurgency and hence they could be targets of reconciliation. The military leaders, particularly Petraeus, argued that once the US applied a COIN-S, they would win over the population, and the strategy would produce the same outcome in Afghanistan as it had done in Iraq. Afghanistan would not turn into another Vietnam, maintained the military, because similar false assumptions had been there about the Iraq War. Nor was the escalation of war in Afghanistan similar to the 'domino theory', which hugely influenced the thinking behind US escalation in Vietnam, because terrorists would cause another 9/11 from the region if they were given a breathing space. For the military leaders, the Vietnam argument was based not on facts but on idealism:

those who had opposed the Iraq War now turned their idealism against the Afghanistan War. If Obama listened to those arguments and did not approve the surge, or approve a strategy of ‘instrumentalism’ (marginal shifts in strategy and resources), *then* Afghanistan would become a ‘quagmire’ for the US.

These were the views of the military leaders and Hillary Clinton,<sup>24</sup> Blair and Peter Lavoy from the Directorate of National Intelligence,<sup>25</sup> the military’s supporters in Congress,<sup>26</sup> the press,<sup>27</sup> and other outside actors who gave testimonies to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations or wrote articles in influential foreign policy journals and magazines.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Gates, Robert, Afghanistan: Assessing the Road Ahead, ‘Statement of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates Senate Foreign Relations Committee’, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, December 3, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/GatesTestimony091203a1.pdf>>; Mullen, Michael G., Afghanistan: Assessing the Road Ahead, ‘Statement of Admiral Michael G. Mullen, US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Before the 111th Congress Senate Foreign Relations Committee’, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, December 3, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/MullenTestimony091203a1.pdf>>; Petraeus, David H., ‘Statement of General David H. Petraeus to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee’, Hearing Before *Senate Committees on Foreign Relations*, December 9, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/PetraeusTestimony091209a1.pdf>>; Clinton, Hillary R., Afghanistan: Assessing the Road Ahead, ‘Secretary Of State Hillary Rodham Clinton Testimony Before The Senate Foreign Relations Committee Washington, DC’, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, December 3, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/ClintonTestimony091203a1.pdf>>; McChrystal, Stanley, Commander’s Initial Assessment, August 30, 2009, pp. 1-1 to 1-4, 2-3 to 2-6, 2-8, 2-9, 2-10, 2-11, 2-15, <[http://media.washingtonpost.com/wpser/p/olitics/documents/Assessment\\_Redacted\\_092109.pdf?sid=ST2009092003140](http://media.washingtonpost.com/wpser/p/olitics/documents/Assessment_Redacted_092109.pdf?sid=ST2009092003140)>; McChrystal’s Speech in International Institute for Strategic Studies; ‘Generation Kill: A Conversation With Stanley McChrystal’, *Foreign Affairs*, March/April, 2013, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/discussions/interviews/generation-kill>>; Gates, op. cit., pp. 213, 355-356, 364-365, 371-384, 496; Clinton, op. cit., pp. 25, 129-149, 151, 153; Gerson, Michael, ‘In Afghanistan, No Choice but to Try’, *The Washington Post*, September 4, 2009; Gerson, Michael, ‘Decision Time for Obama’, *The Washington Post*, September 30, 2009; Kaplan, Fred, ‘The End of the Age of Petraeus; The Rise and Fall of Counterinsurgency’, *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2013, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138459/fred-kaplan/the-end-of-the-age-of-petraeus>>; Barker (August 31, 2009) op. cit.; Baker (December 5, 2009), op. cit.; Tyson, op. cit.; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., pp. 234-235; Dodge, Toby, and Nicholas Redman. 2011. *Afghanistan: to 2015 and beyond*. London: *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, pp. 54-61; Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 34, 153-156, 162-165, 172-175, 187-190, 194, 202-227, 269, 299, 339; Woodward, Bob. ‘McChrystal: More Forces or ‘Mission Failure’, *The Washington Post*, September 21, 2009; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., pp. 119-120, 210, 218, 218, 251, 292; Singh, op. cit., pp. 78-79.

<sup>25</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 145, 162, 166, 171, 187, 189- 191, 202-203, 296-297.

<sup>26</sup> Graham, Lieberman and McCain, op. cit.; Tyson, op. cit.; Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 204-206.

<sup>27</sup> Kristol, William, ‘No Will, No Way’, *The Washington Post*, 2009, September 1, 2009; Boot, Max, ‘Anyone but Karzai?’, *The Washington Post*, February 13, 2009; Gerson ( both articles), op. cit.; ‘Topic A: Is the War in Afghanistan Worth Fight?’, op. cit.

<sup>28</sup> Biddle, Stephen, “Assessing the Case for War in Afghanistan” Statement by Dr. Stephen Biddle Senior Fellow for Defense Policy Council on Foreign Relations’, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, September 16, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/BiddleTestimony090916p.pdf>>; Nagl, John A., “A ‘Better War’ in Afghanistan” Prepared Statement of Dr. John A. Nagl President, Center for a New American Security’, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, September 16, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/NaglTestimony090916p1.pdf>>; Bergen, Peter, ‘Confronting al-Qaeda: Understanding the Threat in Afghanistan and Beyond’, Hearing Before *Senate*

These were the different arguments that Obama heard from the two sides. They equally represented the divided public debate during the period for the decision to surge. These arguments must have woken up Obama to the complexities of the Afghanistan War. For years, he had been blaming President Bush, but now he might have felt sympathy for the 44th President of the United States. Moreover, these views questioned the very nature of the Afghanistan War, raising a very serious question that had not yet been realised: most probably, the US was in the wrong country, fighting the wrong enemy; actually, fighting a group that in fact was not the enemy, nor connected to the enemy. The enemy, AQ, was in Pakistan, not Afghanistan. Had Obama been mistaken all along by saying the Afghanistan War was a war of necessity? As will be seen in section three, these views seriously challenged Obama's belief system and images of the Afghanistan War.

These arguments or belief systems carried assumptions, and the next section, section two, is dedicated to dealing with them. However, to avoid repetition, the underlying reasons or grounds for most of the assumptions are excluded since they have already been discussed in the present section. (The same applies to referencing, as most of them are already acknowledged.)

## 5.2. ASSUMPTIONS BY THE TWO SIDES

First, the Biden camp assumed that most empires failed in Afghanistan, so the US would be likely to follow suit. As Afghanistan had become a Vietnam for the Soviet Union, it was further assumed, Afghanistan would equally become another Vietnam for the US. However, the military leaders and their supporters did not assume that the US would meet the same fate as the Soviets for the reasons explained above. They equally rebutted the

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*Committee on Foreign relations*, October 7, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/confronting-al-qaeda-understanding-the-threat-in-afghanistan-and-beyond>>; Crocker, Ryan C., 'Countering the Threat of Failure in Afghanistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, September 17, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/countering-the-threat-of-failure-in-afghanistan>>; Jones (2009), op. cit., p. 294-295; Elias, Barbara, 'Know Thine Enemy; Why the Taliban Cannot Be Flipped', *Foreign Affairs*, November 2, 2009, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65639/barbara-elias/know-thine-enemy>>; Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 54; Baker, Kim, 'Letter From Kabul: Solving Afghanistan's Problems; What the United States Must Overcome in Afghanistan', *Foreign Affairs*, 2009, November 30, 2009, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/features/letters-from/letter-from-kabul-solving-afghanistans-problems>>; Kagan, op. cit.; O'Hanlon (2010), op. cit.; Christia, Fotini, Michael Semple, 'Flipping the Taliban; How to Win in Afghanistan', *Foreign Affairs*, July/August, 2009, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65151/fotini-christia-and-michael-semble/flipping-the-taliban>>; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., pp. 231, 234-237; Mayor, Mark, 'The L-Word in Afghanistan; Can the United States Provide What Kabul Needs', *Foreign Affairs*, November 15, 2009, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65681/mark-moyar/the-l-word-in-afghanistan>>

Vietnam assumption, as they had done in relation to Iraq. Second, a COIN-S, according to its manual, required certain conditions – including a reliable government, sufficient security forces, secure borders, one counter-insurgent for fifty Afghans, a 14-year duration, and a suitable environment – to be in place *before* the strategy was effective, but these conditions, as explained in subsection one, were absent in Afghanistan and hence the chances of success were minimal. The military leadership acknowledged the shortcomings, but assumed that it did not matter greatly because their proposed COIN-S would, like Iraq, establish security (of Afghans against all threats) and the shortcomings would be remedied. Third, there were numerous assumptions regarding Pakistan: firstly, the proposed COIN-S did not extend beyond the Afghanistan borders into safe haven in Pakistan, so it was assumed by the Biden camp that the US would not win regardless of how many troops they deployed to Afghanistan. The military leaders admitted that the Pakistani safe havens were a problem, but they assumed that the COIN-S would provide the Afghan people with security and other basic needs, and therefore the Afghans would naturally side with their government, causing the camps in Pakistan to become irrelevant; secondly, for the Biden group, Pakistan was assumed to hold the key to ending the conflict in Afghanistan, and since the surge would further undermine Pakistan's interests in Afghanistan and the region, Pakistan would create obstacles to undermine the proposed COIN-S. The military did not assume that Pakistan held the key to the Afghan conflict, and if the US established security, Pakistan's role would be minimised. Moreover, Pakistan and the US were assumed to have shared the same interests and enemy in the region; thirdly, the US footprint in Afghanistan was assumed to be feeding insecurity in Pakistan, and, by applying a COIN-S, it might make it worse. The US presence in Afghanistan was, on the contrary, assumed by the military to be helping Pakistan's security and stability. These were the numerous assumptions relating to Pakistan.

Fourth, the Biden camp did not assume that TB would pose a danger to the US and hence did not classify it as an enemy; and there was no need to defeat them (assumed to be too ambitious, unachievable, and an unnecessary goal as far as US interests were concerned in Afghanistan). Consequently, Afghanistan was not as important as the military made it appear, and thus a CT-plus-S would suffice in order to hunt terrorism and (a less ambitious goal) disrupt the TB. For the military, both AQ and TB were assumed to pose threats to US interests and both were one enemy, and both needed to be defeated. The two camps also

had contrasting assumptions regarding TB reconciliation: the Biden camp assumed that it was possible to make peace with TB even if they applied a CT-plus-S, but the military contended it was only plausible to reconcile themselves with TB when the US had an upper hand in the fight; something that they did not have during the Af-Pak review, and could only be achieved by a COIN-S. Fifth, hard though it might be, the Biden camp did not assume a US retreat from Afghanistan to be strategically detrimental to US interests. The military, however, assumed that if the US retreated (which they called 'defeat'), it would have severe consequences. Sixth, it was assumed that Congress (and the American public in general) was turning against the war, and if the American casualties and US spending went up in a war without an end, Congress would terminate funding. The military assumed it did not matter if Congress was turning against the war, as their planned COIN-S was assumed to be successful in Afghanistan, and once the military showed success, Congress would change its mind and support the war. It was the case with the Iraq War, too, before the surge, but many Senators changed their minds.

Seventh, major risks emanated from corrupt governance, not from lack of security, Eikenberry assumed.<sup>29</sup> But the military leaders assumed that major risks emanated from lack of security, not corrupt governance. Eighth, it was assumed by the military that the surge would work like 'ink-blot' that would expand across the map of Afghanistan, but the Biden camp did not buy this assumption.<sup>30</sup> Instead the Biden camp assumed that insurgency would expand to those parts of Afghanistan that were peaceful during the Af-Pak review. Ninth, after the announcement of the surge, the limit on the duration of the military engagement (the caveat) was assumed to allow them to accelerate the transfer part of the strategy, because it would give all sides (the Afghan Government and the Americans) a sense of urgency.<sup>31</sup> The military supporters, however, assumed the caveat would prove detrimental to the surge as friends and foes would think that the US would leave again before it secured a stable Afghan Government with competent security forces.<sup>32</sup>

There were a number of assumptions that neither group showed opposition to. It was assumed that Pakistan might stop cooperation, or worst of all, its weak government might

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<sup>29</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 296.

<sup>30</sup> Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 327.

<sup>31</sup> Clinton, *Assessing the Road Ahead*, op. cit.; Obama (December 1, 2009), op. cit.; Gates, op. cit., pp. 571-572.

<sup>32</sup> O'Hanlon (2010), op. cit.

collapse if the US applied more pressure on Pakistan.<sup>33</sup> Secondly, Afghanistan never had an effective central government to provide governance in the rural parts,<sup>34</sup> and the Bush Administration's objective for such a government was mistaken. By focusing on a central government, the US ignored the rural population, who were the centre of the TB's focus. Therefore, the new strategy would support, in addition to key governmental institutions, Afghan traditional and conservative networks or structures at tribal or community levels in order to provide some form of (decentralised) governance to rural Afghanistan.<sup>35</sup> Thirdly, Karzai was presumed to be one of the main causes of the problems (including corruption) in Afghanistan, and Bush's close relation with Karzai was one of the reasons that other US policymakers could not pressurise Karzai to bring meaningful reforms, as no one else from the US Government had any real leverage or could speak with authority. It seemingly was assumed that Karzai had the power and the capacity, but not the willingness. The policymakers, especially Biden and James Jones, assumed that changing the nature of the relationship (Obama being less accessible, firm and even harsher) would force Karzai to bring reforms.<sup>36</sup> Fourthly, the diplomatic aspect of the surge, as assumed by the State Department, would enable the State Department to work with NATO as well as Russia, China, India and other Muslim countries to develop a regional solution whereby neighbours, especially Pakistan, focused on economic integration and cooperation.<sup>37</sup>

These were the assumptions that the policy suggestions of the two camps carried. These assumptions were the direct results of the policymakers' personal characteristics, notably their belief systems and images. Using their bureaucratic positions, members of each group tried to influence the President with their belief systems. It is therefore important to consider whether the policymakers' belief systems or their governmental positions managed to influence the process of the decision-making and consequently the resulting decision. Moreover, it is also essential to analyse the impact of domestic influences, namely, divided public opinion, upon the decision. Considering the above causal factors would also shine a light on the milieu Obama and the policymakers operated in to

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<sup>33</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, 'What engagement with Pakistan Can – And Can't – Do', *Foreign Affairs*, October 12, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136413/christophe-jaffrelot/what-engagement-with-pakistan-can-and-cant-do>>

<sup>34</sup> Will, op. cit.; Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 219.

<sup>35</sup> Gates, op. cit., p. 7; Obama's Orders for Afghanistan, Pakistan Strategy of November 29, 2009, in Woodward (2010), op. cit.

<sup>36</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 37, 71; Gates, op. cit., p. 337.

<sup>37</sup> Clinton, *Assessing the Road Ahead*, op. cit.

make the December 1, 2009 decision. The next section (and the concluding section) make an attempt to ascertain the impact of the above external factors upon decision-making and the resulting decision. However, the analysis, where it can, avoids stating or spelling out the belief systems and images (that formed their arguments) of the policymakers, since they have already been covered in section one. Where necessary, the origins of them are explained; that is, why, how and when they were formed.

### **5.3. BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS, BELIEF SYSTEMS AND DOMESTIC INFLUENCES**

#### *5.3.1 An introduction*

The Obama policymaking team for the decision to surge (and, in most cases, for the decision to withdraw) could be divided into five: the Vice-President, the inner circle, the outsiders, the Petraeus camp, and the President himself. Each, and its influence on the decision to surge, are considered below.

#### *5.3.2. The Vice-President*

Like many previous presidents, Obama chose a vice-president who was an established Washington insider and well experienced in FP: a six-term Senator from Delaware (serving as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations between 2001 and 2003, and again between 2007 and 2009), twice (unsuccessfully) seeking Democratic presidential nomination in 1988 and 2008, and considered the most trusted voice on FP in the Democratic Party in 2001.<sup>38</sup> Biden was a 'leading liberal hawk' who supported military interventions for 'altruistic' purposes, including nation-building, e.g. US involvement in the Balkans in the 1990s and Iraq invasion in 2002.<sup>39</sup> In 2008, as seen in the previous chapter, he asked for a 'Marshall Plan' for Afghanistan to make the country self-sustaining', even though it would take up to a decade. Karzai would perform better if the US provided more resources, troops, and a better strategy. The US should commit whatever it took, he maintained, or else history would judge the US harshly if it allowed the hopes of the liberated Afghans to evaporate. He was hopeful that the US would not experience the Soviet

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<sup>38</sup> Goldberg, Jeffery, 'Letter From Washington: The Unbending; Can the Democrats Make Themselves Look Tough?', *The New Yorker*, March 21, 2005; Crowley, op. cit.; Mann (2012), op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

fate in Afghanistan since the former offered 'a better choice'.<sup>40</sup> His belief system in 2008, and previously, was consistent with the perspectives the military camp had during the Af-Pak review. But, as seen above, in 2009, during the Af-Pak review, Biden's belief system and images of the Afghanistan War had shifted considerably. The sudden shift in his belief system is said to have been caused by his tour to Afghanistan as Vice-President-elect,<sup>41</sup> in which Biden discovered through McKiernan and other US officials that there were no AQ operatives in Afghanistan but in Pakistan, and US forces told him they did not know why they fought in Afghanistan. Biden himself was lost on what US objectives in the country were. In the same tour, he seemed to have formed a view that it was not just the shortcomings in the Bush Administration's Afghan policy to blame for the US failure in Afghanistan, but also the 'incompetence' and unreliability of President Karzai and his corrupt government. Back in Washington, he was constantly reminded by his former colleagues, particularly Chuck Hagel, especially after the 21,000 troops had not produced any results and the military was asking for yet more, that the Afghanistan War was unwinnable and resembled President Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam War. If Obama approved the expensive surge, the President would repeat Lyndon Johnson's footsteps: more casualties and beyond-US-capacity spending would force Congress to treat Obama the same way as it had done Johnson (bring a premature end to the war), and, like Johnson, Obama would take the blame for losing the war as most of the military leaders would not be in their positions in a couple of years' time.<sup>42</sup>

Obama made sure Biden played the role of the 'devil's advocate'<sup>43</sup> in the policy debate by allowing the Vice-President to present his opposing views to the military, ask as many questions regarding the proposed COIN-S as he could, and be aggressive in his pursuit of CT-plus-S. Like Cheney, Biden formed a FP team, which included a few former and current military generals, to discuss McChrystal's options and sharpen its questions – a team which, with the assistance of Cartwright, and without the prior knowledge of the Pentagon,

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<sup>40</sup>'A Conversation with Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. [Rush Transcript; Federal News Service]', *The Council on Foreign Relations*, February 25, 2008; Biden Joe, 'Afghanistan. Pakistan. Forgotten', *The New York Times*, March 2, 2008; Crowley, op. cit.

<sup>41</sup> Gates, op. cit., pp. 336-337; Crowley, op. cit.

<sup>42</sup> Freedman, Lawrence D, 'Paying the Human Costs of War: American Public Opinion and Casualties in Military Conflict', *Foreign Affairs*, September/December, 2009, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65308/christopher-gelpi-peter-d-feaver-and-jason-reifler/paying-the-human-costs-of-war-american-public-opinion-and-casu>>; Crowley, op. cit.; Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 37, 71-72, 102, 159-160, 188-189, 319.

<sup>43</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 166.



produced an *alternative* military plan to that of McChrystal, recommending that the deployment of 10,000 fighting forces and another 10,000 enablers would suffice. To weaken McChrystal's assessment further, Biden successfully persuaded Eikenberry to put down his sceptical thoughts on the proposed COIN-S in cables. His views in the cable were time and again used by Biden to imply that *if* the US Ambassador to Afghanistan claimed that a COIN-S would not work, how on earth were the military still emphatic on their requests?<sup>44</sup> Eikenberry's advice was not ordinary since he served *in* the country as US Ambassador. Nor was Lute's advice – another member of Biden's FP team. Like McChrystal, he had done his research when he was in Afghanistan to write the 2008 report. Like McChrystal, he (with about 25 people working for him) still remained in contact with US commanders on the ground, even though this angered the military leaders, Gates included.<sup>45</sup> Biden also made sure he wrote a separate memo to the President before each meeting, outlining his thoughts, including: only CT-plus-S, no full COIN-S, no nation-building, focus on AQ, degrade not defeat TB, occupy those places which could be transferred to the Afghans, and not to accept to build 400,000 ANSF. If not, Biden persistently warned Obama, the US would be 'locked in Vietnam'.<sup>46</sup> As will be explained in the next section, most of these policy suggestions were reflected in the final strategy Obama made.

For Obama, Biden served an 'enormously useful function' in the decision-making. Biden argued that he took all these steps (persistently questioning the military plan and its assumptions) to ensure the military did not 'push' an inexperienced President.<sup>47</sup> It is important to mention, however, that during his 35 years in the Senate the 'experienced' Biden had made many 'poor' judgments (e.g. supporting the Iraq invasion in 2003 or opposing US involvement in the Persian Gulf War in 1991 on the grounds that no 'vital' US interests were at stake), and the pro-military lobbyists were quick to highlight them, adding that there was no basis for Biden to regard himself as 'a combination of Henry Kissinger and Carl von Clausewitz'. They urged Obama not to listen to Biden and accept McChrystal's request to revive the 'losing war' in Afghanistan.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 160, 235-238, 254-255; Crowley, op. cit.; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p.126; Gates, op. cit., p. 379; Mann (2012), op. cit., pp. xxi 143, 211, 225.

<sup>45</sup> Gates, op. cit., p. 482.

<sup>46</sup> Baker (December 5, 2009), op. cit.; Woodward, op. cit., pp. 166, 310, 324; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>47</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 159-160.

<sup>48</sup> Gerson (September 30, 2009), op. cit.; Gates, op. cit., p. 288; Mann (2012), op. cit., p. 97.

### 5.3.3. *The Outsiders*

The outsiders are those who did not fit in the administration. It does not signify that they had different viewpoints to those of the above two camps; it rather means that their views were heard but hardly listened to. Consequently, they had very limited sway over the decision to surge. One member was the NSA James Jones. He, together with other military men such as Blair, is said to have been appointed for political purposes. The military men could provide a cover for Obama's defence and security decisions, offer assurances against the known Republican charges that Democrats were weak on national security issues, explain military traditions and costumes to a president who did not know much about them, keep relations between the military establishment and the President smooth, and, if necessary, be a force against the military establishment, especially Jones who had a reputation for outspokenness – for example, publicly claiming that Rumsfeld had 'systematically emasculated' the Joint Chiefs, or warning Pace to stop being 'the parrot on the secretary's shoulder'.<sup>49</sup> But Jones – a retired Marine general, a former commander, a NATO commander and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's part-time envoy for security in the Middle East – proved to be a weak NSA during the Af-Pak review, and, despite his attempts (e.g. to put a stop to the military campaign in the media), he failed to be a counterweight to Gates, Mullen and Petraeus the way he had been expected to.

Jones never became one of Obama's trusted advisors or inner circle because Jones and Obama did not know each other personally and only met twice before Jones's appointment as an NSA – Jones was recommended by FP 'wise men', Brent Scowcroft in particular, to Obama. Since Jones was used to a military decision-making style in which juniors obeyed seniors, he found it difficult to adapt to the centralised decision-making style the 'lawyer-professor-politician' President adopted in which the inner circle, as opposed to the immediate advisors, had the most say. As a former military commander, he found it difficult to act like an aide to Obama to fit the inner circle or become responsive to Obama's decision-making style. Consequently, the two barely met. To make matters worse, the inner circle seemingly did not treat Jones as a NSA. Examples include cutting Jones's access to the President; refusing to show Jones the President's inaugural speech, even though Jones

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<sup>49</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 36-38; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 227; Mann (2012), op. cit., pp. 9, 25.

asked for it; preparing memos without Jones's knowledge; sidelining Jones by often talking to Deputy National Security Advisor Donilon; often staying away from Jones's strategy briefings; interrupting Jones in meetings to say the NSA was wrong on Obama's views and thoughts; getting things done by invoking the President; and leaking derogatory information about Jones, accusing him of being lazy, forgetful, and out of touch with the President. Jones repeatedly urged Obama to do something about the inner circle's contemptuous treatment of him, but, according to Jones, Obama was not tough on what Jones privately called the 'Mafia', the 'campaign set', the 'water bugs' who flit around, and consequently did not take care of the situation. On the contrary, since Obama cared a lot about having a problem-free and smooth administration, and Jones's quarrel with the inner circle (and other outsiders who, too, came into conflict with the inner circle) became an obstacle to that, Obama eventually had to fire him (and the other outsiders). Being close to a president and his trusted advisors as well as following his operating style are two factors that make an NSA effective, but none of the conditions existed in Jones's case. Consequently, his voice was lost in policymaking for the decision to surge, even though his views, especially those regarding the conditions of the COIN-S, were more compatible with the arguments made by the Biden camp than the military.<sup>50</sup>

Jones's deputy, Donilon, on the other hand, worked much harder and longer and handled most of the day-to-day issues at NSC. His administrative experience during the Carter and Clinton Administrations made it easier for him to be an aide and responsive to Obama's operating style. Donilon's closeness to Biden (he worked for Biden during the primaries in 2008, and previously in 1988 during Biden's short presidential race), Blinken (old friend and colleague), Emanuel (friend for several decades), Lippert and McDonough further played to his advantage. Thus, a mixture of giving the highest attention to the president's instructions, hard work, and his closeness to the President and those close to

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<sup>50</sup>Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 126-127, 131-132, 137-140, 161, 168-169, 198; Woodward, Bob. 'Key in Afghanistan: Economy, Not Military', *The Washington Post*, July 1, 2009; Gates, op. cit., pp. 290-292, 376-377; Daalder, Ivo H., and I. M. Destler, 'In the Shadow of the Oval Office; The Next National Security Advisor', *The Brookings Institution*, January/February, 2009, <<http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2008/12/01-national-security-adviser-daalder>>; Destler, I. M. Donilon to the Rescue; The Road Ahead for Obama's Next National Security Advisor', *Foreign Affairs*, 2010, October 13; Mann (2012), op. cit., pp. 9, 10, 212-225; Barnes, Julian E., 'Urgent shift in works on Afghanistan', *Los Angeles Times*, December 28, 2008.

him turned him into 'one of my [Obama's] closest advisors'. By many accounts, Donilon was almost the NSA, and acted like one.<sup>51</sup>

Dennis Blair – the commander of all US forces in the Pacific, a Rhodes Scholar, a White House Fellow, and a senior military aide for the NSC – was another outsider and likewise less prominent compared to his deputy Brennan. Like Jones, Blair could not become responsive to Obama's operating style. As a military man, the intelligent and straightforward Blair spoke what was on his mind, but Obama did not seem to appreciate Blair's bluntness. After decades of service, Blair could not change his style to please the President. It began to create a distance between the President and him. Another factor was the ambiguous authority his job carried. His job as the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), created during the Bush Junior era, replaced (theoretically) the CIA Director in running the American intelligence community, including briefing the President every morning. But the law had left out some grey areas, for example, the extent of the DNI's authority over the CIA, or the nature of the relationship between the CIA Director and the President were unclear. Was the CIA Director to report directly to the President or to the DNI? While this remained unclear, Blair demanded authority over the CIA's covert action programmes (such as the drones) and asked for the station chiefs to come from other intelligence agencies, too. But due to his 'extraordinarily deep institutional knowledge of the White House, Congress, and the CIA' in the course of the four decades service in government,<sup>52</sup> and his friendships with some powerful individuals (e.g. Nancy Pelosi and his protégé, Emanuel, who had helped him in the CIA appointment), Panetta, to Blair's frustration, successfully defended his turf. Blair was on good terms with Jones, but, as Blair himself admitted, Jones himself was an outsider. The turf battle between Panetta and Blair created obstacles to the smooth running of the administration, and further distanced Blair from Obama.<sup>53</sup> The third factor, and the most important one, that deteriorated the relationship between the President and his DNI, was the Brennan factor.

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<sup>51</sup> Destler (2010), op. cit.; Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 40, 200; Mann (2012), op. cit., pp. 226-227, 237; Gates, op. cit., pp. 291, 496.

<sup>52</sup> 'Opening Statement', 'Kerry on President Obama's National Security Team Nominations,' *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, April 28, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/chair/release/kerry-on-president-obamas-national-security-team-nominations>>

<sup>53</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 57, 122; Mann (2012), op. cit., p. 11, 43, 105, 144, 214-215; Gates, op. cit., p. 294.

John Brennan was from the outside, but he was another insider. Neither Donilon nor Brennan would have been deputies had the administration been certain that they would secure a Senate confirmation. Due to Donilon's previous connection to Fannie Mae and Brennan's reputation for being Bush's man, their names were withdrawn from the top positions. However, they were still treated as if they were the top men, not deputies. Brennan's office was located less than a minute away from the Oval Office, and so Obama asked Brennan for advice whenever he had questions about intelligence issues. As an ex-CIA specialist on Middle Eastern countries, Brennan was versed not just in intelligence issues, but also in FP issues. Thus, due to his access to Obama and his knowledge in FP, he had more say in intelligence issues than the CIA Director or Blair. According to Mann, for former CIA Director Michael Hayden, Brennan was the actual DNI, not Blair. After the middle of November, according to Woodward, the President no longer allowed Blair in NSC meetings for the Af-Pak review, as he was 'edging too much into policy advice'. Yet Brennan remained part of the review up to the end. In sum, the relationship between Obama and Blair was not close, but grew further apart due to Brennan's closeness with Obama, the White House's backing of Panetta's turf, and the report on the bomber from Yemen, which put the blame on the individuals at the National Counterterrorism Center, but Blair disagreed and told Obama and Brennan to change it even if it meant they had to delay the timing of a very crucial press conference. To Obama's frustration, it was changed but Blair was shortly fired.<sup>54</sup>

Given Richard Holbrooke's job title (overseeing all the State Department's work on Afghanistan and Pakistan and coordinating diplomacy with all the regional countries), his almost 50-year experience in American FP (active in the Democratic Party before many of the Obamians were not even born), his accomplishments (notably, bringing an end to the Balkans conflict in the 1990s), and his strong and forceful manner (nicknamed 'The Bulldozer'), Holbrooke should have been the most effective, but he was not and consequently his voice was lost, even though his belief system was in sync with the Biden camp (and Obama) over the conditions of the COIN-S, Pakistan-related problems, and the possibility of Afghanistan turning into Vietnam. Like Biden (and Obama), he was practical,

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<sup>54</sup> Mann (2012), *op. cit.*, pp. 105, 216-221; Woodward (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 265. The bomber from Yemen attempted to detonate plastic explosives while on board a US aircraft. The report blamed the National Counterterrorism Center for numerous failures, including the failure to prevent the bomber from boarding the aircraft.

pragmatic, not an ideologist, not a pacifist, and believed in the application of military force if the cause was worthy, but did not support expensive wars that posed a threat to the US economy, which determined the fall and rise of a nation, and it was no surprise that he found himself naturally in agreement with the Biden camp and in disagreement with McChrystal's proposal.<sup>55</sup> For Holbrooke and his staff and advisors, including Barnett Rubin, there was one remedy for Afghanistan, and that was a regional solution/peace settlement that gave Afghanistan's neighbours a stake in the settlement, most crucially Pakistan, which had destabilised Afghanistan thus far.<sup>56</sup> As already said, neither did Holbrooke's possible peace deal receive serious attention during the Af-Pak review, nor did Holbrooke manage to influence the decision in any way or shape. This had a variety of reasons, some relating to Holbrooke himself and others to the numerous impediments to a peace settlement.

First, while Obama was in favour of peace talks, Mullen, Petraeus, and Clinton thought TB would not negotiate because they had the momentum – the COIN-S strategy would first gain momentum and then the US would talk. Panetta, however, thought that the US could not negotiate with TB until it denounced AQ, or else the US would be dealing with terrorists. Second, Holbrooke's aggressive campaign against Obama during the 2008 presidential campaign, during which he had called Obama inexperienced and young and was destined to fail, was still in the mind of the Obama team, and, in certain cases, had left 'scars'. According to Gates, the 'team of rivals' approach worked better between Obama and Clinton compared to lower levels. Third, as far as Chandrasekaran was concerned, Holbrooke seemed to be of the wrong generation (compared to the inner circle and the President), 'serving at the wrong time', as, apart from Clinton, nobody seemed to like him in the administration. McDonough and Rhodes did not like Holbrooke because of his efforts to bring strong FP experts into the Democratic Party around Clinton, and because they thought he leaked sensitive information to journalists; Biden did not like him since the Clinton Administration, thinking of him as egoistic. Jones found Holbrooke 'unctuous and prolix' and sympathised with his fellow military friends Lute and Eikenberry, both of whom did not get on with Holbrooke due to Holbrooke's micromanagement of policy: for example, sending

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<sup>55</sup> Holbrooke, Richard, 'The Next President; Mastering a Daunting Agenda', *Foreign Affairs*, September/October, 2008, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63563/richard-holbrooke/the-next-president>>; Mann (2012), op. cit., pp. 21, 125, 229; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., pp. 222-223, 225, 231; Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 296.

<sup>56</sup> Holbrooke, op. cit.; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 226; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 225.

dozens of emails and requests for information on a daily basis. Obama kept a distance from Holbrooke and never granted him one-to-one meetings. His manically intense and 'in your face' manner clashed with Obama's calm and measured demeanour and his well-known 'no drama rule'. According to Clinton and Chandrasekaran, many times Obama wanted to remove him from his post, but Clinton would intervene and save his job.

Thus he was left 'marginalised' and the 'odd man out' among the White House advisors, and it did not take long before an anti-Holbrooke attitude developed in the NSC, to the extent that Holbrooke's analysis was sometimes left unread in inboxes. Four, Holbrooke was 'undercut' not only by the White House, but also by the presidential palace of Arg in Afghanistan. Holbrooke obsessively supported Ashraf Ghani Ahmedzai to win during the 2009 presidential election, and this angered Karzai. During the time of the Af-Pak review, Gates and Chandrasekaran reveal, the relationship between Holbrooke and Karzai had deteriorated to the extent that Karzai had told his aides he did not want to meet Holbrooke again because he believed the former was interfering in the election; the American Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan was almost barred from seeing the President of the very country he was trying to fix! John Kerry had to be sent to fix the situation and the White House blamed Holbrooke for making a bad situation worse. Obama and his inner circle were aware of his influence in Afghanistan being very limited, but, instead of supporting Holbrooke, the White House did not seem to care about his barring. Holbrooke himself could not do much with Karzai. He could credibly threaten Milošević, but with an elected president (Karzai) he could not do so, especially when Obama did not support him. Finally, since Clinton (who disregarded Holbrooke's advice on Afghanistan) supported the surge, he could not make his opposition as publicly obvious as Eikenberry did, and therefore remained quiet and, consequently, less effective.<sup>57</sup>

For those factors, his contribution to the Af-Pak review, notably his goal to make the peace deal with TB a central focus of the review, was limited. The assumption that TB would not negotiate because it had the momentum was taken at face value and was not argued in detail. Out of all the above factors, it was the lack of support from the President that really devastated Holbrooke and his strategy.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Chandrasekaran, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-94, 127, 223-233; Mann (2012), *op. cit.*, pp. 88, 229; Gates, *op. cit.*, pp. 287, 350, 358, 384-385; Clinton, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

<sup>58</sup> Chandrasekaran, *op. cit.*, p. 230; Gates, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

#### 5.3.4. The Inner Circle

Like President John Kennedy, who had 'set up a little state department' in the White House,<sup>59</sup> Obama established his own FP team made up of his inner circle. Generally speaking, the members of the inner circle were those who helped Obama during the 2008 election, and Obama appointed them around him, either in the White House or in the NSC. They shared many characteristics with Obama, including age (relatively young and consequently seeing themselves as a 'new generation' in FP), work experience (none worked previously in the main executive branches of the government, but on FP in academia or Congress, e.g. McDonough and Rhodes), and opposition to the Iraq War before it began.<sup>60</sup> Most of them were old friends and helped each other to get a position in the Obama team during the presidential campaign and later in the administration. McDonough, Lippert, Rhodes and Axelrod were among those with whom Obama spent plenty of time. After and before a meeting with his Cabinet-level advisors, such as Clinton, Gates or Jones, and after the morning intelligence briefings in which some of the inner circle were present, too, Obama would ask for McDonough, Lippert and Rhodes's views on the topics he had already discussed or topics he was likely to discuss. At times, Obama would even discuss with them the options he had in mind for a final decision. While ultimate decisions were made by Obama, including the decision to surge (and the decision to withdraw), they helped him reach those decisions. In effect, the inner circle was 'an extension of the President himself, the Chief Obamian', and accordingly wielded enormous power in the making of FP.<sup>61</sup>

Like many of his predecessors, including Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and Bush Junior, Obama centralised policymaking within the White House. Obama's White House not only tightly controlled every aspect of national security policy, but also interfered in operational details: for example, Lute would continue to monitor the strategy in Afghanistan. But unlike Bush Junior, Obama's 'rational' approach required decisions to be

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<sup>59</sup> Pfiffner, James, 'Decision Making in the Obama White House', *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (June), 2011, pp. 244-262, p. 245, <<http://www.marioguerrero.info/326/Pfiffner2011.pdf>>

<sup>60</sup> Mann (2012), op. cit., pp. xxi, 46, 68-69, 71, 75, 132-134; Gates, op. cit., p. 587; Obama, Barack, Democratic National Convention Keynote Speech, July 27, 2004, <<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/convention2004/barackobama2004dnc.htm>>

<sup>61</sup> Hirsh, Michael, 'The Clinton Legacy', *Foreign Affairs*, May/June, 2013, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/139110/michael-hirsh/the-clinton-legacy>>; Brzezinski, Zbigniew, 'From Hope to Audacity; Appraising Obama's Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2010, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65720/zbigniew-brzezinski/from-hope-to-audacity>>; Gates, op. cit., pp. 384-385; Mann (2012), op. cit., pp. xx-xxi, 82-83, 141-143, 211.



made on the basis of ‘information’ not ‘emotions’.<sup>62</sup> Obama preferred to have a deliberate and highly analytical process in which all contrasting views and options were analysed, and hence the President invited not only his immediate advisors to the decision-making, but also career diplomats and experts to directly confront their policy suggestions, disagreements, and, at times, themselves in front of the President. Obama did not want to repeat the disorderly decision-making process of President Lyndon Johnson in 1965 and Bush Junior in 2002-3, in which both presidents failed to examine the reasoning, judge the consequences, and discuss the alternatives. But to the frustration of the President and his inner circle, Obama’s ‘multiple advocacy’ approach to policymaking led to policy being debated in the media and Congress. Petraeus’s interview in Gerson’s article, McChrystal’s speech in London, Mullen’s statement to the *Senate Armed Services Committee*, and the leaking of some highly classified documents – in all of which the military leaders publicly supported a COIN-S, asked for *resolve*, and shunned Biden’s proposed CT-plus-S as unworkable – are examples that made the inner circle and the President furious.<sup>63</sup> McDonough and Donilon on a number of occasions contacted either Colonel Erik Gunhus, Petraeus’s spokesman, or Geoff Morrell, the Pentagon spokesman, to complain that resources and strategies were something the President decided, and he was willing to debate them with the military leaders, but it was wrong of the military leaders to publicly lobby for a strategy by giving interviews or leaking documents (e.g. McChrystal’s assessment) while Obama was conducting a review to discuss the strategy. It was an attempt, they added, to force the President to approve the proposed COIN-S. Obama had to have a meeting with Mullen and Petraeus to tell them that he believed the military leaders conducted a subtle campaign in public in order to ‘jam him’, adding that he felt ‘disrespected’, ‘trapped’ and ‘boxed-in’.<sup>64</sup> The military leaders did have the right to give Obama military advice, but by giving it publicly

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<sup>62</sup>Pfiffner, op. cit., p. 249; Gates, op. cit., pp. 289, 566, 585-586.

<sup>63</sup> McGurk, Brett, ‘Agreeing on Afghanistan: Why the Obama Administration Chose Consensus This Time’, *CNN*, June 22, 2011, <<http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/06/22/agreeing-on-afghanistan/>>; Desch, Michael C., ‘Obama and His General; Should McChrystal Solute and Obey?’, *Foreign Affairs*, October 27, 2009, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65662/michael-c-desch/obama-and-his-general>>; Kaplan, op. cit.; Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 157-159, 173-177, 197; Baker (December 5, 2009), op. cit.; Tyson, op. cit.; Gates, op. cit., pp. 367-370; Pfiffner (2011), op. cit.; Mann (2012), op. cit., pp. 135-36; Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 61; McChrystal’s speech (2009), op. cit.

<sup>64</sup>Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 172-175, 197; Mann (2012), op. cit., pp. 135-136; Baker (December 5, 2009), op. cit.; Gates, op. cit., pp. 368-369. According to Gates, some in the White House characterised the military leaders as ‘insubordinate’ and ‘in revolt’ and thus turning the atmosphere even more ‘poisonous’, Gates, op. cit., p. 377.

they undermined Obama's authority over the military.<sup>65</sup> The State Department and the military leaders, on the other hand, complained that the White House launched a subtle campaign against the proposed COIN-S and leaked documents to weaken the case for more troops. They gave the leaking of Eikenberry's cables as an example. The military leaders were not happy with the cables (written without consultation with McChrystal) being requested by the White House.<sup>66</sup>

Despite assurances from Gates, McChrystal and Petraeus that they would keep their views within the Cabinet and the Pentagon,<sup>67</sup> the military continued with its campaign up to the end of the Af-Pak review and even beyond,<sup>68</sup> as Petraeus found other ways (through hawkish Senators and pro-military experts) to communicate his messages.<sup>69</sup> This 'adversarial'<sup>70</sup> nature of policymaking undermined the entire decision-making process. It turned most attention towards the military aspect of the strategy, failing to discuss in detail the political, diplomatic and civilian part of the strategy. It did not serve the President as it prejudged Obama's decision, forcing Obama to reach for a compromise. According to Gates, the NSC staff could have acted as an 'honest broker', but, due to the damaging rift, they defended one group against the other and failed to remain neutral.<sup>71</sup>

Even though the inner circle and the Biden camp were close to Obama and found their views compatible with those of the President, they (and the President) could not influence the decision entirely in their favour because they faced a very powerful camp: the military.

#### **5.3.5. The Military and its Supporters**

Though Mullen and Gates, as well as Clinton, were superior to him in terms of their bureaucratic positions, in the Af-Pak review Petraeus's say counted the most since he was the expert on strategy and responsible for overseeing the war. After the Vietnam War, especially since the beginning of the 1980s, a COIN-S manual was neither published nor taught at West Point, as the US military determined never to engage in guerrilla fights. But it

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<sup>65</sup> Desch (2009), op. cit.

<sup>66</sup> Baker (December 5, 2009), op. cit.; Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 157; Gates, op. cit., p. 370.

<sup>67</sup> Gates, op. cit., p. 368.

<sup>68</sup> Rosenberg, Matthew, Peter Spiegel, 'Top U.S. General Under Fire; Afghan War Strategist McChrystal Summoned to Explain Magazine Comments', *The Wall Street Journal*, June 23, 2010; Hastings, Michael, 'The Rolling Stone profile of Stanley McChrystal that changed history', *The Rolling Stone*, June 22, 2010; Gates, op. cit., pp. 384-85, 557.

<sup>69</sup> Desch (2009), op. cit.; Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 159, 194, 206.

<sup>70</sup> McGurk, op. cit.

<sup>71</sup> Gates, op. cit., pp. 384-388.

was, as Axelrod privately called Petraeus, ‘Mr. Counterinsurgency’, who brought the COIN-S into the Army curriculum.<sup>72</sup> Petraeus himself was influenced by the French expert David Galula and, for referencing purposes, Petraeus always carried a copy of the former’s book entitled *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*. Galula had fought in several counter-insurgencies and believed that defeating ‘fleas requires draining the swamp that sustains them; defeating insurgencies requires protecting, then wooing or co-opting, the population that sustains the cause’.<sup>73</sup> According to Galula, Mao Zedong, the successful Chinese insurgent leader, and numerous studies conducted by the RAND Corporation, the ‘clear, hold and build’ strategy mainly focused on the hearts and minds of the people.<sup>74</sup> The counter-insurgent – who was not just a soldier but also an engineer, a social worker, and a schoolteacher – needed to mingle with the population to give them a sense of security and to learn about them and their internal realities. It was then that informed choices could be made, making it possible for the counter-insurgent to win over the population.<sup>75</sup> Petraeus learned from these experts, and later became an expert himself when he wrote his PhD on the COIN-S and successfully applied it in Mosul in Iraq in 2006 where none of the other officers had done so (because US Commander in Iraq, George W. Casey, was against it).

After producing considerable improvement in Iraq in 2007, Petraeus believed that bringing security to the Afghan population would bring the same outcome in Afghanistan. Petraeus used his Iraq experience to find solutions to the Afghanistan-related obstacles, at times referring to the former more than 24 times in a single hour.<sup>76</sup> McChrystal similarly relied on his Iraq experience. In a testimony before the Senate, he made it clear that a simple answer to the conflict in Afghanistan was a holistic COIN-S. The testimony took place *before* he carried out his assessment in Afghanistan.<sup>77</sup> One can therefore find it difficult to disagree with Chandrasekaran, who claimed that, like the neoconservatives’ Jeffersonian democracy and free economy which led the US into expensive wars, the COIN-S became the

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<sup>72</sup>Mann (2012), op. cit., p. 121; Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 191; Kaplan, op. cit.

<sup>73</sup> Kaplan, op. cit.

<sup>74</sup> Jones (2009), op. cit., pp. 151-162.

<sup>75</sup>A Conversation With Stanley McChrystal, op. cit.; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 75; McChrystal’s assessment, op. cit., pp. 1-2, 2-4, 2-5; Kaplan, op. cit.

<sup>76</sup> Petraeus (2009), op. cit.; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 221; Kaplan, op. cit.; Clinton, op. cit., p. 134; Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 80, 190, 217-218.

<sup>77</sup> James, Frank. ‘Won’t Measure Afghan Success By ‘Enemy Killed’: McChrystal’, *npr*, June 2, 2009.

ideology (or belief system) of the military leaders, which equally required years of nation-building.<sup>78</sup>

Petraeus's case was reinforced when the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mullen *vigorously* embraced McChrystal's assessment, as it offered both resources and the necessary strategy, two commodities that Afghanistan had been deprived of for years. Mullen defended the COIN-S not only in the Situation Room, but also outside by using his Facebook page, website (entitled 'Travels with Mullen: Conversations with the Country'), and Twitter account. Having been 'emasculated by his two predecessors in the Rumsfeld era', Mullen wanted to re-establish the prominence of the chairman's position. Mullen therefore actively tried to be more effective and bureaucratically prominent in policymaking compared to his predecessors from the Bush Junior Administration.<sup>79</sup> Perhaps he was more involved in policymaking because Gates was not Rumsfeld, and because Gates, too, supported the strategy.

Gates – a former staffer on the NSC, Deputy National Security Advisor, and CIA Director with 'a wealth of experience and knowledge' in FP and national security issues<sup>80</sup> – held both Petraeus and McChrystal in high regard. Gates played a crucial part in Petraeus's appointment as the Iraq Commander in 2006 and McChrystal's installation in his Afghanistan post in 2009.<sup>81</sup> While Gates supported the military camp and most of its arguments, he equally tried to become the middleman by making efforts to keep the White House and the military relationship smooth. To do so, he had to make many concessions during the review: Gates agreed with Obama that the goal to defeat the indigenous TB was ambitious and impossible and should therefore be changed to degrade (though he believed that TB and AQ were inseparable); offered the July 2011 timeline for US troops to begin to transfer security to the ANSF in order to begin to withdraw regardless of whether the COIN-S was working or not; reduced McChrystal's proposal for 40,000 to 30,000 troops; concurred that building a 400,000 ANSF force was unnecessary and undesirable – though Gates believed that the ANSF were the ticket out of Afghanistan for the US, and it was essential to spend the resources to build a strong force; admitted that a fully-resourced COIN-S in

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<sup>78</sup> Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 118. Incidentally, due to its military nature, the strategy was capable of keeping the Defense Department central to policymaking.

<sup>79</sup> Gates, op. cit., pp. 87, 100-101; Woodward, op. cit., pp. 101, 173.

<sup>80</sup> Mann (2012), op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>81</sup> Gates, op. cit., pp. 41, 44.

Afghanistan sounded a lot like nation-building, and instead it should be a COIN-S with a focus on places where population was most threatened by TB – this seemed to have dropped the east of Afghanistan from McChrystal's assessment as an area of operation; consented that nation-building was too expensive, and the administration should instead focus on capacity building (certain ministries and provincial governors with good record) – such focus, as far as Gates was concerned, would negate the good governance and effective ANSF requirements of a COIN-S; recognised that building good governance in Afghanistan was against the history of the country, so they needed to support and build those ministries, provincial governors, and existing traditional structures that were not corrupt and essential to enable them to achieve their objectives; concurred with Obama that they should not aim for a Western-style democracy in Afghanistan since it was neither necessary nor plausible, given Afghanistan's history – as long as there was a government (or any existing traditional structures) that could provide basic services and manage to hold TB at bay, Gates was content; and agreed that NATO should also increase its share of troops and resources in Afghanistan and take more responsibility for the north and west.<sup>82</sup> As will be seen below, these concessions enabled Obama to narrow McChrystal's original strategy, as Obama managed to apply limits on the number of troops, duration of their stay, and the goals they were to achieve. These compromises also gave Gates sway over decision-making, and, as will be seen in section four, the resulting strategy was consistent with the suggestions offered by Gates.

Obama respected Gates a great deal and gave 'serious' consideration to the views of his Defense Secretary. In Obama's view, Gates held the NSC together by trying to reduce the tension between the military and the White House. For Obama, Gates had a clear understanding of US national security interests, and, if need be, Gates was willing to take on the Pentagon bureaucracy.<sup>83</sup> Gates managed to integrate the goals of the Pentagon into US 'broader foreign policy agenda',<sup>84</sup> and, unlike Rumsfeld, Gates refused to be turf-driven. On numerous occasions Gates would defend the turf of other departments, such as the State

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<sup>82</sup> Spiegel, Peter and Yochi Dreazen, 'Obama Receives New Afghan Option; 'Hybrid' Compromise Would Combine Troops, Trainers to Hold Back Taliban and Boost Local Military', *The Wall Street Journal*, November 12, 2009; Gates (December 3, 2009), op. cit.; Gates, op. cit., pp. 337, 366, 373-375, 365-366; Baker (December 5, 2009); Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 108-110, 165, 219, 251-253; Mann (2012), op. cit., p. 135; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 128.

<sup>83</sup> Woodward, op. cit., pp. 23, 289-290.

<sup>84</sup> Kerry (April 28, 2011), op. cit.

Department, if he believed it needed defending. This quality made him liked not just by Bush Junior and Obama, but also by Rice, Clinton and many in Congress.<sup>85</sup> Obama also liked Gates's calm, low-key and balanced manner. Like Obama, Gates was 'Mr. Cool', and managed to keep his big ego in check while being simultaneously forceful. In NSC meetings, Gates gave importance to when and what to speak, and avoided being emotional or over-the-top. Both Gates and the President thought alike, as both were influenced by the 'realist' world views of Scowcroft. Gates's 'mentor', Scowcroft, who provided FP advice to Obama during the presidential campaign in 2008, was admired by the President. All three were prudent, pragmatic and, at times, accommodationist. All three had similar outlooks in FP to those of Dwight D. Eisenhower, Richard Nixon and George H. W. Bush.<sup>86</sup> These numerous qualities or characteristics of Gates seemingly brought the Defense Secretary closer to Obama, even though Gates was not in the inner circle. Obama consistently urged Gates to stay longer in office because Obama needed him. When eventually he left in 2011, Obama bestowed upon him the Freedom Medal. In sum, even though Gates supported McChrystal's COIN-S in Afghanistan, he did not agree with all the requests made by McChrystal. He seemed, as he himself agrees, to somehow partly agree with the Biden group, especially on costs and goals.<sup>87</sup> But he had supported a COIN-S in Iraq and it had paid off, so he might have equally believed that it would do the same in Afghanistan which, in his view, had been deprived of a strategy and resources.<sup>88</sup>

Clinton, on the other hand, did not appear to agree with the Biden camp on any aspects of their policy suggestions. Her unequivocal support of the Petraeus camp during the surge decision raised numerous questions, including whether she could be trusted, whether she could ever be on the Obama team, and whether she was not playing for her political future as US president.<sup>89</sup> Woodward asked these questions because Clinton had been Obama's rival in the Democratic primary campaign, in which she repeatedly called Obama inexperienced in FP, and Obama, likewise, accused her of holding similar ideas about FP that had led to the Iraq War. At times the attacks become personal. 'Shame on you, Barack Obama', Clinton told Obama, accusing him of lying. Samantha Power had to resign after

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<sup>85</sup> Clinton, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25; Kerry (April 28, 2011), *op. cit.*; Gates, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

<sup>86</sup> Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 6; Woodward (2010), *op. cit.*, pp. 21-23, 138, 290; Baker (December 5, 2009), *op. cit.*; Gates, *op. cit.*, pp. 6, 80, 297-298; Mann (2012), *op. cit.*, pp. 8, 165.

<sup>87</sup> Gates, *op. cit.*, pp. 44, 384-385.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Woodward (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 254.

calling Clinton ‘a monster’ who was ‘stooping to anything’.<sup>90</sup> Given all the tension (even animosity) between the Obama and Clinton camps during the campaign, and despite the inner circle’s discontent, Obama selected her as his Secretary of State because Obama, akin to Abraham Lincoln, wanted to bring rivals together in the Cabinet.<sup>91</sup> Obama believed she would be loyal if she became part of the team. Ultimately, she stood by her husband after the Monica Lewinsky scandal, and could stand by the President, too. Mann, however, believed that Obama’s underlying purpose was political, as the appointment made sure there was not another Robert Kennedy in the Johnson years, or Ted Kennedy in the Carter years; both Kennedys were considered a ‘magnet for intraparty opposition to the president’, and both of the above presidents served only one term. Like Bobby Kennedy had done, a hypothetical speech by Clinton with a dovish message could equally have attracted many anti-war supporters against the Obama Administration.<sup>92</sup>

Whatever the reasons for her appointment might have been, the larger-than-life Clinton would not go down in history as one of the greatest, such as George Marshall or Henry Kissinger, because, upon her leaving, she had no signature achievement, no ‘world-historical Clinton Doctrine’, and no diplomatic achievement.<sup>93</sup> Unlike Kissinger, Clinton did not seem to have the trust of the President and never developed ‘warm personal ties’ with him. Similar to Powell and dissimilar to Kissinger, Clinton faced the presence of a powerful vice-president in the White House, who, like Cheney, had a separate power centre on FP and was deeply experienced in it. A combination of these two factors made it at times ‘as hard for her to persuade the White House to take her advice as it was to deal with foreign governments’.<sup>94</sup> She did not even have the power to remove the disobedient Eikenberry because the ambassador was protected by Biden and Obama.<sup>95</sup> She never made a point of her voice being lost and her turf being encroached upon, not even in her memoir, and got along with her job.

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<sup>90</sup> ‘Hillary Clinton’s a monster’: Obama aide blurts out attack in Scotsman interview’, *The Scotsman*, March 6, 2008; Mann (2012), op. cit., p. 89; Woodward (2012), op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>91</sup> Clinton, op. cit., p.13; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 225; Mann (2012), op. cit., pp. 3-5.

<sup>92</sup> Mann (2012), op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>93</sup> Hirsh, op. cit.; O’Hanlon, Michael E. ‘State and Stateswoman: How Hillary Clinton Reshaped U.S. Foreign Policy — But Not the World’, *The Brookings Institution*, January 29, 2013, <<http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2013/01/29-hillary-clinton-state-ohanlon>>

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Gates, op. cit., p. 371.

While she won praises for being a team member, loyal and not standing publicly against the White House, her tendency not to involve herself personally in conflicts prevented her from being an influential voice in decision-making. Perhaps her quietness, even in her memoir, was due to her alleged presidential plans. For the same reasons, it is claimed that she did not want to be seen to be failing. She charged Holbrooke for the Af-Pak arena to bring about a solution to the conflict, and when there was not much progress, she was reluctant to step in.<sup>96</sup> Finally, her inexperience in FP was seemingly detrimental to her role in decision-making. During her husband's era, she never sat in NSC meetings, never had a security clearance, never managed any part of the national security bureaucracy, never had her own national security staff, and never got involved with foreign governments. She only had a behind-the-scenes role in decisions. One domestic decision she was in charge of was to pass the universal health care bill that failed.<sup>97</sup>

While her undeniable support of the military case raised some questions, it is important to state that her belief systems or views during the Af-Pak review were *consistent* with her FP outlooks during her primary campaign in 2008. As a future US president, if she won, she would commit more troops and resources to Afghanistan, support the capacity of the Afghan Government to stand on its own feet, increase the size and capacity of the ANSF to a level so that they could establish basic security, press the allies to increase their support for the Afghanistan War and drop their caveats, and appoint a special envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan who would develop a regional strategy and work with Pakistan to address the terrorist threat.<sup>98</sup> McChrystal's options were not dissimilar to what Clinton had wanted for Afghanistan, and thus her views were naturally hawkish like the military,<sup>99</sup> and consequently she agreed with the arguments made by the military camp. Clinton was willing to support the military's side, even though her top foreign policy advisors, Jim Steinberg<sup>100</sup> and Holbrooke, advised her not to because the mission had an 'open-endedness' to it, the military had not made a good case, and like US generals in Vietnam, McChrystal might come back after a while and ask for yet more troops. They suggested Clinton support the 20,000 option by Biden. She, on the other hand, believed that the 40,000 option would make a

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<sup>96</sup> Hirsh, op. cit.; O'Hanlon (2013), op. cit.

<sup>97</sup> Mann, op. cit., pp. 43-44.

<sup>98</sup> Clinton, Hillary, 'Clinton's Plan for Afghanistan', *Council on Foreign Relation*, March 6, 2008.

<sup>99</sup> Hirsh, op. cit.; Gates, op. cit., pp. 376, 382.

<sup>100</sup> Who was unprecedentedly given a seat in the Principle Committee and at NSC meetings, giving the State Department two voices, Gates, op. cit., p. 289.



difference, and it was important that the US showed resolve.<sup>101</sup> Indeed, as will be seen below, when Clinton and Gates, the 'independent power centre', the 'unfireable',<sup>102</sup> showed resolve and supported the military, Obama was forced to surge. According to Dodge and Redman, both Clinton's and Gates's support of the military case significantly diminished Obama's running room, leaving him with no choice but to decide on the surge since he could not disagree with the two main departments responsible for FP.<sup>103</sup>

#### *5.3.6. The President and the Bureaucratic War between the Biden and Petraeus Camps*

Unlike the Bush Junior War Cabinet, the Obama team did not have a common understanding of how to deal with the world, since its members were not all Democrats (e.g. Robert Gates, James Jones, Dennis Blair and John Brennan) and most of them had limited experience in FP and national security issues (especially those with military backgrounds, as well as Clinton and Panetta). Consequently, neither were there Cheney, Powell, and Rumsfeld with a century of experience, nor a neoconservative-type movement with an already made ideology. This, and his upbringing overseas, gave Obama the confidence to be the main strategist, 'the Henry Kissinger' of his administration. 'It was Obama's own ideas, sometimes changing over time, that have determined America's role in the world during his presidency.'<sup>104</sup> But Obama found it difficult to make the surge decision the way he desired due to the impact of bureaucratic politics, contrasting belief systems and images, and a divided public opinion.

As seen in section one, the contrasting viewpoints were shared with Obama over and over again during the extensive Af-Pak review. The Biden camp used a COIN manual written by no one but Petraeus himself, and the military camp drew on the precedence from the Iraq War to justify their contrasting assumptions. The views of the Biden camp, however, challenged Obama's long-held belief system and images of the Afghanistan War: a necessary war for US national security, which required a 'comprehensive strategy' and sufficient resources in order to 'win'.<sup>105</sup> In 2009, however, the President developed genuine doubts

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<sup>101</sup> Clinton, op. cit., p. 140; Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 250, 292.

<sup>102</sup> Gates, op. cit., p. 289.

<sup>103</sup> Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>104</sup> Mann (2012), op. cit., pp. xx, 43; Hirsh, op. cit.

<sup>105</sup> Obama, Barack, Obama's Speech at Woodrow Wilson Center, *The Council on Foreign Relations*, August 1, 2007, <<http://www.cfr.org/elections/obamas-speech-woodrow-wilson-center/p13974>>

about the Afghanistan War and the suitability of a COIN-S for Afghanistan, seemingly finding compelling, if not convincing, the Biden camp's arguments of 'Afghanistan-having-minimal-relevance-to-US-national-security-interests', 'TB-and-AQ-not-connected-and-AQ-would-not-return-if-TB-tookover-Afghanistan', 'no-AQ-in-Afghanistan-and-TB-were-not-US-enemy-so-what-were-US-objectives-in-solving-a-civil-war', 'missing-prerequisites-of-COIN-and-thus-the-wrong-strategy', 'geographical-concentration-of-COIN-having-a-balloon-effect', 'three-Pakistan-related-problems', and, to a certain extent, 'Afghanistan-another-graveyard-another-Vietnam'.<sup>106</sup>

Obama's main concern, however, was the costs. He found McChrystal's strategy financially, strategically, humanly, and politically very costly. *Financially*, if the surge was authorised, US troop numbers in Afghanistan would stand at around 100,000, costing Obama between 2010 and 2020, the duration the COIN-S required, roughly \$1 trillion, approximately the same as his health care plan. Moreover, \$55 billion was needed to establish the 400,000 ANSF and another \$8 billion every year for their salaries. For Obama, such huge spending did not match up with US national security interests and could not be sustained financially. 'I'm not doing 10 years. I'm not doing a long-term nation-building effort. I'm not spending a trillion dollars', Obama told the military leaders.<sup>107</sup> He also had to take other considerations into account, including the dire economic conditions in America. In 2009, the American economy kept contracting by 6.3 percent at an annual rate, unemployment kept moving up each month, the stock market had dropped from 7,949 to 6,443 points a few months before the review (early March 2009), and Chrysler and General Motors slipped into bankruptcy.<sup>108</sup> A year before, many other big organisations had declared bankruptcy and their gloomy impact still remained in 2009. According to the study conducted by the London's International Institute for Strategic Studies, by the end of

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Obama, Barack, (2009).REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT ON A NEW STRATEGY FOR AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN. [The White House] <[http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Remarks-by-the-President-on-a-New-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-on-a-New-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan)>

<sup>106</sup> Obama, Barack, (2009).REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT ON A NEW STRATEGY FOR AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN.[The White House] <[http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Remarks-by-the-President-on-a-New-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-on-a-New-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan)>; Obama (December 1, 2009), op. cit.; O'Hanlon (2010), op. cit.; Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 160, 163, 167-169, 189-190, 207, 216-217, 280, 319-321; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., pp. 119-21; Mann (2012), op. cit., p. 140; Gates, op. cit., pp. 362, 557; Baker (December 5, 2009), op. cit.; Kerry (September 16, 2009), op. cit.; Kerry (September 28, 2009), op. cit.; Kerry (October 26, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>107</sup> Obama quoted in Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 251, 263, 280-281; Baker (December 5, 2009), op. cit.; Gates, op. cit., p. 372.

<sup>108</sup> Mann (2012), op. cit., p. 117.

December 2010 the US had spent \$5 trillion on the two wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>109</sup> By 2009, the spending might have stood at around \$4 trillion in both countries. This was nearly half of the US's overall deficit in 2009. For the 2009 fiscal year alone, the US budget deficit increased by a record number of \$1.4 trillion.<sup>110</sup> US indebtedness to China had increased from \$78 billion in 2001 to over \$1.1 trillion in 2011. While 'U.S. financial strength and flexibility had been seriously eroded' by 2009, China's financial and military capabilities had grown, endangering US supremacy in East and South-East Asia.<sup>111</sup> Now the military was asking for an extra \$1 trillion, more than what Obama had just received for his stimulus package – the sum of \$787 billion, the largest in history – from Congress. One more trillion was self-destructive, further threatening to end the US current global pre-eminence.<sup>112</sup> *Strategically*, the COIN-S would have caused the US to be over involved in the Middle East and Afghanistan at the cost of other regions, such as the Asia-Pacific.<sup>113</sup> He equally did not want a heavy involvement in Afghanistan at the cost of *domestic* interests such as his health care bill or the rebuilding of America, including the recovery of the fragile US economy and reducing higher unemployment.<sup>114</sup> *Humanly*, the war could result, as admitted by McChrystal and Petraeus, in the loss of thousands of US lives in the first years of their COIN-S.<sup>115</sup> August 2009 was already the deadliest month for American soldiers, and more troops meant that Obama would write letters of condolences to many more US families whose loved ones were going to be sacrificed in Afghanistan.<sup>116</sup> As a person, Obama would be 'haunted' by yet more human toll.<sup>117</sup> And *politically*, losing more American lives and treasure in a war, which Obama did not think would end in the foreseeable future, would

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<sup>109</sup> Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>110</sup> 'U.S. Budget Deficit Hit Record \$1.4 Trillion in 2009', *Fox News*, October 07, 2009.

<sup>111</sup> Leffler, Melvyn P., 'September 11 in Retrospect; George W. Bush's Grand Strategy, Reconsidered', *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68201/melvyn-p-leffler/september-11-in-retrospect>>

<sup>112</sup> Obama (December 1, 2009); Brzezinski, Zbigniew, 'From Hope to Audacity; Appraising Obama's Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2010, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65720/zbigniew-brzezinski/from-hope-to-audacity>>

<sup>113</sup> Haass, Richard N., 'Hearing on Afghanistan: What is an Acceptable End-State, and How Do We Get There?', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 3, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/afghanistan-what-is-an-acceptable-end-state-and-how-do-we-get-there>>; Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 167-168, 280; Singh, op. cit., p. 86; Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>114</sup> Obama (December 1, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>115</sup> Petraeus, op. cit.; Frank James, op. cit.

<sup>116</sup> Kerry (September 16, 2009), op. cit.; Obama (December 1, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>117</sup> Baker (December 5, 2009), op. cit.

have serious political repercussions. It could cost him his presidency in the 2012 presidential election (more below).

Obama did not want the COIN-S, which required more troops and nation-building, but rather a strategy that helped improve Afghan governance, increase and improve the ANSF to join the fight, and provide more developmental aid.<sup>118</sup> Obama preferred the mission to be more Afghanised. Obama, however, could not act in accordance with his belief system, even if he was the decider. As explained in section one, his decision carried risks both ways. Obama, like Shakespeare's Hamlet, had to think deep to decide to surge or not to surge. Unsure of what to do, the President began consulting those whom he trusted. Colin Powell advised the President that neither should he listen to the left to do nothing, nor to the right to do everything. The President should take his time to figure out what decision to make, a decision that would have consequences for his remaining time in office.<sup>119</sup> No nation-building and no COIN-S were General George Casey's, the Army Chief of Staff and Marine Commandant General James Conway's short answers.<sup>120</sup> While the high-profile military men (including Cartwright, and the retired Lute and Eikenberry) did not support McChrystal's COIN-S, and so how could Obama be hopeful it was the right strategy? So what Obama did was to continue to consult experts in order to find answers to some very 'important' questions. In doing so, the review lingered, becoming the most protracted and extensive since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. To many, it signalled fundamental uncertainty on the part of the President.<sup>121</sup> Those on the right viewed Obama as 'weak, naive and feckless', whereas those on the left perceived him as someone who showed a disheartened 'buyer's remorse'.<sup>122</sup> His polling fell during the period he was conducting the Af-Pak review: 45 percent of ordinary Americans compared to 63 percent from the previous spring, and 22 percent of Republicans compared to 51 percent at its peak now approved the President's handling of the war. His ratings on Afghanistan had dropped much more than his ratings on handling other policies, due to the shift by the Republicans, who were disappointed in Obama's handling of the war. They, including Cheney, believed that Obama was 'dithering' and delaying at a time when US forces were in danger and the military leaders asked for a

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<sup>118</sup> Woodward (July 1, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>119</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 175, 311.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, pp. 258-260.

<sup>121</sup> O'Hanlon (2010), op. cit.; Singh, op. cit., p. 73.

<sup>122</sup> Singh, op. cit., p. 3.

sense of urgency.<sup>123</sup> Obama seemingly felt under tremendous pressure, especially when he was accused of putting US forces in danger by delaying the decision, or else Obama might have not used a few sentences of his speech of December 1, 2009, to tell the American public that there was *no* delay of troops and resources to Afghanistan.

While he seemed unwilling to accept the demands of the two sides, he could not afford to say no to any of the sides, especially to the military. Refusing the military requests outright was unwise for numerous reasons. Colonel Tien's advice to the President explains very well one of the reasons: 'Mr. President, 'I don't see how you can defy your military chain here. We kind of are where we are. Because if you tell General McChrystal, I got all this, I got your assessment, got your resource constructs, but I've chosen to do something else, you're going to probably have to replace him. You can't tell him, just do it my way, thanks for your hard work, do it my way. And then where does that stop?''<sup>124</sup> Tien had a point because it was Obama, who from the very start wanted to get the Afghanistan campaign right and, therefore, approved the appointment of McChrystal to carry out the assessment. Now if Obama refused to approve his plan, the possibility was that McChrystal would resign. Since Petraeus was the overall commander and his COIN-S was being refused by the President, he might also resign. Surely their resignations would also force Gates to follow his two commanders. (According to Gates, some in the White House worried about the military leaders and Gates 'quitting'.)<sup>125</sup> Gates had promised McChrystal that he would do his best in the Situation Room to fight the military's case.<sup>126</sup> As Woodward put it, this would have been very difficult for Obama to weather.<sup>127</sup> Most importantly, Petraeus was not an ordinary commander. He was a war hero, who had turned a losing war into a relatively successful outcome in Iraq. He had a lot of supporters not only in the military, but also in the media and, of course, Congress. The extraordinarily hard-working Petraeus was described as another General Dwight D. Eisenhower, 'the pre-eminent soldier-scholar-statesman of his generation', who left America 'transformed', 'The Legend of Iraq', 'simply among the very best military leaders of his generation', 'a modern exemplar of the soldier-scholar-statesman and who has exerted a profound influence on the American military

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<sup>123</sup> Langer, op. cit.; Balz and Cohen, op. cit.

<sup>124</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 319.

<sup>125</sup> Gates, op. cit., pp. 352, 369.

<sup>126</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 319-320.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 320.

establishment', and a potential future Republican rival to Obama.<sup>128</sup> Such was the status of the 'clear-thinking, competitive, and politically savvy'<sup>129</sup> Petraeus that the President faced. The argument in favour of Petraeus (and McChrystal) in some sections of the media was that if Petraeus (and McChrystal), *after* carrying out the assessment in Afghanistan authorised by Washington, thought the proposed COIN-S was the answer in Afghanistan, why were the civilian leaders second-guessing him?<sup>130</sup> Gates argued that McChrystal was the most successful CT-S practitioner in the world, yet Biden and his camp acted as if they understood the CT-S better than McChrystal.<sup>131</sup>

Another reason was the Gates-Clinton factor. The two – who had developed 'a very strong relationship', and agreed with each other 'on almost every important issue' –<sup>132</sup> headed the two giant departments responsible for making US FP, and refusing them would have been politically reckless. Saying no to them and to the military would have meant that if anything went wrong in Afghanistan and Pakistan then it would have been due to the President's stubbornness not to surge: a President who had *never* served in the military. According to an advisor, McChrystal told Obama this is the option: if you support it, you win; if not, you lose.<sup>133</sup> In the next two or three years (when Obama would be surely running for re-election), the war could go wrong for a variety of reasons, and most of the Biden group, including the inner circle, even Obama,<sup>134</sup> believed that it would go wrong (or at least not much be improved) regardless of what they did or did not do in Afghanistan, but most fingers would be pointed towards Obama for having refused to surge. In the Af-Pak review, Petraeus implied that the achievements they had made politically, financially, and in terms of security, so far in Afghanistan, however problematic they might have been, would be gradually lost if they did not apply a COIN-S. As far as the military camp was concerned, losing Afghanistan meant losing Pakistan.<sup>135</sup> The question for Petraeus was: could Obama

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<sup>128</sup> Mackubin, Thomas Owens, 'All in: the education of General David Petraeus' by Broadwell, Paula, Bernon Loeb, reviewed by Mackubin Thomas Owens, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2012, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137553/paula-broadwellvernon-loeb/all-in-the-education-of-general-david-petraeus>>; Kerry (28 April, 2011), op. cit.; Woodward (2010), pp. 15-17.

<sup>129</sup> Clinton, op. cit., p. 133.

<sup>130</sup> Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 231.

<sup>131</sup> Gates, op. cit., p. 364.

<sup>132</sup> Clinton, op. cit., p. 25; Gates, op. cit., p. 283.

<sup>133</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 320-321.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p. 321.

<sup>135</sup> Gerson (September 4, 2009), op. cit.; Graham, Lieberman and John McCain, op. cit.; 'Topic A: Is the War in Afghanistan Worth Fight?', op. cit.

take the risk?<sup>136</sup> No president with common sense could take such a risk. For years, Obama had been accusing the Bush Administration of making a mess of the Afghanistan War through neglect, lack of resources, and a lack of strategies. Obama would certainly try to avoid such an accusation against himself. Furthermore, for Obama, the key for any eventual drawdown was reintegration of less zealous TB members within the Afghan Government. But Petraeus told him it was impossible without bringing security first, an assumption supported by the intelligence, notably by Lavoy and Blair. The only way to bring security, stop the Afghan Government from being taken over by TB, and make a peace settlement with TB was to apply a COIN-S.<sup>137</sup> The only person who could trigger the process for the COIN-S was Obama. If not, if Obama did not want to approve McChrystal's requests, Gates told Obama, the President should withdraw US forces altogether because '[s]tanding pat, muddling options, muddling through' were alternatives that would put 'our kids at risk'.<sup>138</sup>

Penultimately, there was a part of Obama's belief system that seemed to agree with the military that the Afghanistan surge could produce similar effects like it did in Iraq (at least with regard to the establishment of the ANSF) and so could bring US involvement to a responsible end. The last point will be explained in the next section. Finally, refusing the military and listening to the Democratic Party or the Biden group or his aides meant opening himself to the known and familiar Republican criticism that Democrats were not as aggressive about confronting US enemies as Republicans were and therefore would not deploy troops even if it was necessary.<sup>139</sup> Panetta privately was of the opinion that '[n]o Democratic President can go against military advice, especially if he asked for it'. According to him, Obama should have made the decision within a week. 'Just do it. Do what they say' was his recommendation if Obama asked him, but he never did.<sup>140</sup>

On the other hand, Obama could not equally disregard the advice he received from his political advisors and ignore the public opposition of the Democratic Party to the surge. Biden, Emanuel and Axelrod constantly reminded him whether losing his base in the Democratic Party was worth it.<sup>141</sup> Soon he was going to launch his health care reform in Congress, which he viewed as 'the make-or-break legislation for his administration', and for

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<sup>136</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 191.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., pp. 162, 229-230, 242-243.

<sup>138</sup> Gates, op. cit., p. 375.

<sup>139</sup> Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>140</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 247.

<sup>141</sup> Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 118.

which he required the support of ‘moderate to centrist Democrats’.<sup>142</sup> (For that reason, to make matters more complicated, he also needed the support of the Republican Party and could not say no to the surge.) Moreover, in three years’ time he had another presidential election that required the support of the Democratic Party. Finally, as seen above, he genuinely developed doubts about the COIN-S and its suitability for Afghanistan.

*This* was the milieu – a divided America – Obama found himself in during the Af-Pak review!

The next section covers the decision Obama made, and makes an attempt to explain ‘what’ the end strategy became: a CT-plus-S, a COIN-S, or none. It also offers some concluding remarks on the impact of the three independent variables on the surge decision.

#### **5.4. THE DECISION TO SURGE AND CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Halfway through the review, perhaps realising that Biden and his group seemed not to be succeeding in their efforts to change the military’s mind on its requests, and perhaps failing to develop a clear view on the Afghanistan engagement, Obama stepped in by demanding changes from the military. He asked (more emphatically) for additional options or plans other than the one put forward by McChrystal. He told the military that McChrystal’s plan was open-ended and silent on when to transfer to Afghans. There was ‘neither victory nor defeat in 10 years’.<sup>143</sup> He wanted the plan to have an evaluation point (show progress or the lack of it) and a date they could begin to ‘transfer’ to the ANSF in order to allow US forces to withdraw: an exit strategy.<sup>144</sup> Transfer was the part which would relieve US soldiers to come back home. The Biden group and its supporters, including Kerry,<sup>145</sup> were evidently trying to add the ‘transfer’ factor to the COIN-S. While Obama did not haggle with the military leadership over the absence of the COIN-S conditions in Afghanistan and over the ‘three-Pakistan-related-problems’, as he did not wish to come across as another President Johnson to micromanage the war in Helmand from the Situation Room, the President made it clear that the US and allies could not continue (and sustain) to pay in lives and treasures forever. ‘We don’t want our enemy to wait us out, but we also

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<sup>142</sup> Singh, op. cit., p. 75.

<sup>143</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 251-253.

<sup>144</sup> Baker (December 5, 2009), op. cit.; Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 251-253.

<sup>145</sup> Kerry (September 28, 2009), op. cit.



need to show some light at the end of the tunnel', said Obama.<sup>146</sup> All the plans the military had about Afghanistan, he implied, should be achieved on a deadline, and sooner rather than later. A timeline, remarked Woodward, was a red flag because the military believed that war did not start or end on anyone's schedule as war was not a 'science',<sup>147</sup> but Obama's explanation was that they could not 'sustain support at home and with allies without having some explanation that involves timelines'.<sup>148</sup> The US could not tend to Karzai forever, so if transfer required dealing with local/tribal leaders who would take care of security, Obama was content. He wanted to involve the tribal leaders to take control of the security because he did not want US forces to play the role of sheriff in every single town and village.<sup>149</sup> But this logic was inconsistent with McChrystal's planned COIN-S. These local leaders, most of them previously warlords, could hardly win the hearts and minds of the people, and again this would fail the essence of the COIN-S, which was winning over the population. Obama nevertheless was emphatic on 'transfer' and 'deadline'. Transfer and deadline were something new that were coming into the 2009 Af-Pak review. From the start of US intervention up to Obama's announcement of the Af-Pak strategy on March 27, 2009, the idea of when to withdraw US forces was hardly considered. Obama and most of his War Cabinet focused on what had gone wrong in the war of 'necessity' and how to get them right. But now the tone was different: how to transfer to the Afghans, and to do so at a particular date, and sooner rather than later, as he would not sign on for a plan – like the 'Alternative Mission in Afghanistan' proposed as alternative by the Petraeus camp – that still kept 68,000 US troops by 2017, leaving his predecessor far more troops than Obama had inherited. It was not in their national interest to commit to a decade-long war as the military wanted.<sup>150</sup> So Obama demanded the military reduce the duration. One way to do so, Obama suggested, was to enter the surge troops faster. There was another reason, too, that Obama wanted to shorten the duration. A long-term stay in Afghanistan without an end date would provide TB with more pretexts that the US was planning to permanently occupy the country.<sup>151</sup> Another way to reduce the duration of US involvement was to change the goal. Obama believed that defeating TB was beyond US interests and means, a goal unachievable

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<sup>146</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 229-230.

<sup>147</sup> Gates, op. cit., pp. 363, 379.

<sup>148</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 230.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., pp. 276-279.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., pp. 276-280; Gates, op. cit., p. 379.

due to TB being indigenous fighters.<sup>152</sup> Obama came up with a goal: to disrupt TB, and by disrupt, he did not mean scatter but degrade TB's capacity to such an extent that security could be manageable by the ANSF. Moreover, Obama only wanted to focus the COIN-S on those population centres and lines of communications threatened the most – to secure only *those* that were necessary to disrupt TB until the ANSF were developed.<sup>153</sup>

To reduce costs and duration, Obama made two more suggestions. He wanted the mission to be more internationalised, as this way some troops could be provided by NATO. Having made the strategy purely Americanised was another flaw (in addition to its open-endedness) in McChrystal's assessment. But McChrystal and Petraeus argued that NATO forces did not have the same capabilities as the US forces, they operated under their own rules, so this gave McChrystal less control over them, and there was no unity of command. While Obama half-heartedly bought this argument, as he knew that NATO forces could still be used as trainers, he told the military that they should reduce the number of the ANSF McChrystal had planned to train because the necessity of 400,000 troops was not made clear to him. Instead, McChrystal should set goals on a year-by-year basis. For Obama, the objective of 400,000 ANSF was based on the COIN-S maths, and that was literally the extent of the analysis, 'and there seemed to be a degree of automatic piloting to it'.<sup>154</sup> Obama in effect was applying the Powell Doctrines: clarity of US goals, the duration to achieve them (which would buy him the consent of Americans), and a timeline for an exit strategy. Obama's demands were consistent with Kerry's advice, and if these questions remained unanswered, Kerry had warned, the consequence would be an immature withdrawal where the mission remained unachieved.<sup>155</sup> Obama expected a plan made by the military to include all the alterations he put forward, but, to his frustration, it was never developed. So a disappointed and dissatisfied Obama became more and more involved in the planning of the military decision towards the end than one would expect of a president.<sup>156</sup>

Obama himself wrote the 'clearly defined' strategy – the *President Obama's Orders for Afghanistan, Pakistan Strategy of November 29, 2009* – and, with the cooperation of Gates (as seen above), the President was able to apply limits on the strategy's duration,

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 169; Obama (December 1, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., pp. 228, 270-271.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., pp. 251-252, 264, 276; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 128.

<sup>155</sup> Kerry (September 28, 2009), op. cit.; Kerry (October 26, 2009), op. cit.; Kerry (December 3, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>156</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 279-280.

geography, and goals when he announced his decision in a speech delivered on December 1, 2009. The first clarity Obama brought to the mission was to limit its duration: the 30,000 (+3,000 enablers) surge troops would begin to withdraw in July 2011 and the majority of US forces by the end of 2014. The second was to drop commitments, i.e. creating a 'democratic government' or employing a nation-building strategy, which were irrelevant to US national security interests and which the US could not afford to achieve. The third clarity was the goal: it remained the same to the one he had announced on March 27, 2009: to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat AQ in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and to prevent its capacity to threaten America and its allies in the future.<sup>157</sup> It was no longer defeating TB to achieve the aforementioned goal. Rather, to meet the goal of disrupting, dismantling and defeating AQ, Obama instructed his administration to pursue three objectives *within* Afghanistan: deny AQ a safe haven; reverse TB's momentum and deny or 'disrupt' its ability to overthrow the government; and strengthen the *capacity* of the ANSF and Afghan Government to enable them to take lead responsibility for Afghanistan's future, which would then relieve US soldiers. These objectives were those proposed by Gates during the Af-Pak review,<sup>158</sup> which later Obama included in the strategy. These objectives would be met in three ways: military surge, civilian surge, and working closely with Pakistan, or what was called a 'diplomatic surge'.<sup>159</sup> The military surge would reverse TB's momentum and increase the ANSF so that US forces could transfer responsibility to the Afghans;<sup>160</sup> the civilian surge would provide technical, human, financial, and developmental<sup>161</sup> assistance to improve Afghan institutions, especially those who were led by less corrupt ministers, so that they could provide better governance. The emphasis was not on strengthening a centralised government but working with and enhancing subnational governance and existing local structures, e.g. creating provincial and district *shuras* or councils, even if it meant working around Karzai or his

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<sup>157</sup> Obama (March 27, 2009), op. cit.; Obama (December 1, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>158</sup> Gates, (December 3, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>159</sup> Obama, December 1, op. cit.; The President Obama's Orders for Afghanistan, Pakistan Strategy of November 29, 2009.

<sup>160</sup> Mullen, op. cit.

<sup>161</sup> Developmental assistance was provided to private sectors, most notably the agriculture sector. It also encompassed multifaceted anti-drugs strategy, Clinton (December 3, 2009), op.cit.; Eikenberry, Karl, 'Statement Of Ambassador Karl Eikenberry Before The Senate Foreign Relations Committee', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, December 9, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/EikenberryTestimony091209a1.pdf>>

central government.<sup>162</sup> The diplomatic surge was to pursue talks with TB to facilitate the reintegration of those TB who were coerced to fight, encourage economic integration and cooperation between the regional countries, and deal with the interrelated regional problems, especially between Afghanistan and Pakistan. NATO states, Russia, China, India, other Muslim countries, and especially Pakistan, would be approached for their assistance.<sup>163</sup> All the above diplomatic objectives were achievable if Pakistan acted genuinely. In fact, the entire diplomatic surge was aimed at persuading Pakistan to provide genuine support for US Afghan strategy.<sup>164</sup> To obtain its genuine support, the US was to enhance its support to Pakistan to ensure the Pakistani people and Pakistan met their potential. The State Department was also to launch a new public diplomacy, e.g. people-to-people contacts, to challenge the extremist narratives in Pakistan about the US and ensure ordinary Pakistanis saw the US as a friend, not an enemy. It was a 'counter-propaganda plan', since the Bush Administration had embraced Musharraf but ignored the 185 million Pakistanis.<sup>165</sup>

The two opposing sides (and their supporters), however, made their *own* interpretations of the decision. The military camp and its supporters thought the end decision supported Petraeus's COIN-S.<sup>166</sup> Petraeus believed that he received most of what he had asked for, but, to avoid embarrassment, Obama reduced the number by 10,000. If the President had offered him at the beginning of the review the strategy he announced on December 1, 2009, Petraeus would have grabbed it without hesitation because he could always obtain the missing 10,000 troops from NATO. In July 2011, Petraeus would show progress on the ground and tell the President that the conditions on the ground required the 30,000 troops to stay longer to consolidate the progress, and thus he could extend the

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<sup>162</sup> Clinton (December 3, 2009), op. cit.; Gates (December 3, 2009), op. cit.; The President Obama's Orders for Afghanistan, Pakistan Strategy of November 29, 2009; Obama (December 1, 2009), op. cit.; Eikenberry (December 9, 2009), op. cit.; Lew, Jacob J., 'Deputy Secretary Of State Jacob J. Lew Testimony Before The Senate Foreign Relations Committee', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, December 9, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/LewTestimony091209a1.pdf>>

<sup>163</sup> Petraeus, op. cit.; Clinton (December 3, 2009), op. cit.; Eikenberry (December 9, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>164</sup> Obama (December 1, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>165</sup> Lew (December 9, 2009), op. cit.; Clinton (March 6, 2009), op. cit.; Woodward (2010), op. cit, p. 209.

<sup>166</sup> Petraeus, op. cit.; Mullen, op. cit.; Gates (December 3, 2009), op. cit.; Bernard Gwetzman interviews Max Boot. 'The Road to Negotiation in Afghanistan', *the Council on Foreign Relations*, October 18, 2010; Stolberg, Sheryl G. and Helene Cooper, 'Obama Adds Troops, but Maps Exit Plan', *The New York Times*, December 1, 2009.

duration.<sup>167</sup> The Biden camp and its supporters, on the other hand, thought the end decision did not support the COIN-S.<sup>168</sup> Biden believed the strategy was not aimed at protecting all Afghans, but certain provinces, such as Kandahar and Kabul, in order to prevent the Karzai Government from being toppled by TB until the ANSF were increased.<sup>169</sup> Lute agreed with Biden, adding that Obama ‘fast-forwarded and figured’ Afghanistan would most likely be as bad in 2011 as it was in 2009, yet he did this 18-month surge to prove, in effect, that it could not be done. Yes, the surge was expensive, but not so much that the country could not afford it. By 2011, Obama would have given the military camp ‘its day in court and the United States would not be seen as having been driven off the battlefield’.<sup>170</sup> The only way Lute could explain the final decision was that the President had treated the military as another political constituency that had to be accommodated, as he did not think the review added up to the decision. According to Lute, Obama could have said no to the military leaders, arguing that the military had not yet provided him with results of the 33,000 troops the President had deployed early in the year, or simply saying that Obama did not see the situation was deteriorating in Afghanistan.<sup>171</sup> But the President did not do so for reasons explained in section three. Yet there were others who claimed that neither did Obama employ a full-on COIN-S nor Biden’s CT-plus-S. Rather, it approved a hybrid: a COIN-S in some areas and a CT-plus-C in others. It was a middle way, making both sides happy.<sup>172</sup> There were even some who thought it was a COIN-S but in a ‘hurry’, or a ‘COIN equivalent of putting a DVD into a player and fast-forwarding the movie at thirty times its normal rate’,<sup>173</sup> because the strategy required ‘time, patience and lots of troops’,<sup>174</sup> but Obama approved none of them adequately.

Obama’s statements during the Af-Pak review, as well as his December 3, 2009, speech, nevertheless show that he approved neither a COIN-S or CT-plus-S, nor some kind of a hybrid strategy. Not just a COIN-S but even something less would have required many more troops, who would have had to stay in Afghanistan for at least seven years. Obama allowed

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<sup>167</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 332, 338. Incidentally, it was Petraeus who insisted that withdrawal should be based on conditions on the ground, Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 331.

<sup>168</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 332, 338; Mann (2012), op. cit., pp. 137-138; Kerry (December 3, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>169</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 332.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. 338.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., p. 338.

<sup>172</sup> O’Hanlon quoted in Singh, op. cit., p. 75; O’Hanlon (2010), op. cit.; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 128.

<sup>173</sup> Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 256.

<sup>174</sup> Mann (2012), op. cit., pp. 138-139.

none. Helmand and Kandahar were two out of 34 provinces in Afghanistan in which most of the surge troops were going to be deployed. Even if one accepted that a COIN-S was going to be applied in the two intended provinces, the other 32 provinces were not going to experience COIN operations. Petraeus and McChrystal might have issued orders to pursue a COIN-S in 'the entire theatre' in Afghanistan,<sup>175</sup> but NATO soldiers in those provinces were hardly going to follow orders incompatible with their caveats. Two provinces could hardly make it a hybrid strategy. A CT-plus-S required a maximum of 20,000 to 30,000 to remain in Afghanistan but, instead of reducing the 68,000 US troops already there, Obama brought the number to 100,000. For the President, a CT-plus-S would have prolonged their stay, and in the long run would have been more expensive. Like McChrystal's COIN-S, a CT-plus-S was similarly open-ended. With fewer US troops on the ground, training and increasing the ANSF would have taken many more years; and if one went by Petraeus and McChrystal's assumption, a CT-plus-S would have never enabled bringing about the conditions in which they could increase the ANSF in size and ability. Obama, therefore, *rejected* both as strategies.<sup>176</sup> Though Obama listened to the technically military terms of CT and COIN operations, he did not seem to have thought, by the end, in those technical terms. What Obama seemed to have had in mind was that the 30,000 troops would increase the number of US troops in Afghanistan in the short run, but in the long run US forces would stay much shorter, because his strategy was designed to Afghanise the mission.<sup>177</sup> It was an 'escalate-then-exit strategy'.<sup>178</sup> The surge would create conditions to train more ANSF, who would take over from US forces. Obama and his aides, as well as Gates, saw the ANSF as their ticket out of Afghanistan. He was going to set in motion a strategy to bring to an end, or at least limit, US engagement in an 'endless' war. Obama had only one objective in mind: everything they did, he asked his advisors a few days before he made the decision, should be focused on how it would help them to thin out their presence in Afghanistan. 'It was a surge intended to get the United States out'.<sup>179</sup> That was the main goal! There would be no flexibility in July 2011; it would only be about the flexibility in how the US would draw down,

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<sup>175</sup> Petraeus, op. cit.

<sup>176</sup> Obama (December 1, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>177</sup> Obama (December 3, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>178</sup> Baker (December 5, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>179</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 303.

not if it would draw down.<sup>180</sup> July 2011 would be the beginning of the end of US involvement in Afghanistan, the *start* of the transition, as the ANSF would take over. The President would not hear anyone saying that they were doing fine, but they would be better to do more. He asked his advisors emphatically that, if they disagreed, they should tell him there and then, as he did not want them to say one thing to him and another to their organisations or the media. Nobody disagreed, and the military leaders went on supporting Obama's decision in their testimonies.<sup>181</sup>

While Petraeus aimed at winning the war,<sup>182</sup> the non-interventionist Obama aimed at ending the war, as, according to Gates, for the President, '*it was all about out*'.<sup>183</sup> According to many, Osama bin Laden laid a trap in 2001 and was reasonably confident that he would draw the US into Afghanistan (and other Muslim lands) so that he could bleed 'America to the point of bankruptcy'.<sup>184</sup> Obama seemingly wanted to get the US out of the trap, committing to an extent so that the American *responsibility, capabilities, resources* and *interests* allowed him to do, something his predecessor and the military did not take into account.<sup>185</sup> For Obama, McChrystal's objectives were way beyond US responsibility, means and interests, failing to appreciate the connection between US national security and its economy.<sup>186</sup> But he found it difficult to refuse McChrystal's demands in 2009, due to the military pressure and divided public opinion.<sup>187</sup> Otherwise Obama, if he had the choice, would not have increased the troops, but rather authorised 5,000 to 10,000 troops to train and increase the ANSF.<sup>188</sup> He did so because the military insisted. The reasons as to why he could not refuse the military, as discussed in section three, were Petraeus's larger-than-life character, the pressure applied by influential actors from Congress/press/some outside actors (almost half the public opinion, including ordinary Americans, wanted him to surge), and the Gates-and-Clinton factor. He could equally not refuse his political advisors and the

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid., p. 301; Baker (December 5, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., pp. 326-327; Baker (December 5, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>182</sup> Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 222.

<sup>183</sup> Gates, op. cit., p. 557.

<sup>184</sup> Gordon, Philip H., 'Can the War on Terror Be Won? How to Fight the Right War', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2007, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63009/philip-h-gordon/can-the-war-on-terror-be-won>>; Dodge and Redman, op. cit., pp. 48, 57-58.

<sup>185</sup> Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>186</sup> Obama (December 1, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>187</sup> Mann, however, implied that Obama was not forced into the decision by the military pressure, Mann (2012), p. 140. The finding of this research disagrees. To say he was not forced by bureaucratic pressure would ignore all the bureaucratic politics analysed in section three.

<sup>188</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 312.

Democrats in Congress for the reasons explained in section three. Therefore, the resulting decision was a compromise.

Mann and many others implied that Obama was not forced into the decision by considerations for his political security in the future, because he *believed* in the necessity of the Afghanistan War. Mann rejected the argument that Obama knew that the Afghanistan War was ‘unjust’ and ‘strategically insignificant’, but he still called for increasing the efforts in Afghanistan because he wanted to show he was not a dove or a pacifist.<sup>189</sup> If one was to accept this view that Afghanistan was used for political reasons, Mann maintained, then the same could be true in relation to Iraq; that is, supporting the Afghanistan War and opposing the Iraq War was all a matter of politics, not principle. Obama believed in the legitimacy and importance of the Afghanistan War from 2002 up to the first year of his presidency, including during the Af-Pak review. Obama believed that if the US did not do the surge and increase its efforts in Pakistan, then AQ would find safe haven in Afghanistan or Pakistan and pose a serious threat to the US. Simply put, Mann concludes, Obama meant it when he said he would escalate the war.<sup>190</sup> While this thesis agrees with Mann that Obama saw the Afghanistan War as a relevant war (not important, though, as explained below), it disagrees with the argument that he purely did so because he believed in it. He did so because supporting the Afghanistan War (a war that Bush was accused of having neglected) also brought Senator Obama a great deal of political support from the American people. Gates in his memoir revealed that Hillary Clinton and Obama went against the surge in Iraq in 2006 purely for political purposes.<sup>191</sup> If Obama refused the Iraq surge for political purposes, could he not support the Afghanistan War for the same rationales, too? If the President really believed in the Afghanistan War, why was he backing down in the Af-Pak review? To claim he did not take into consideration his political future while making the decision would ignore the endless advice his aides and Biden gave him during the review, particularly the advice on Congress’s eventual response. Gates in his memoir revealed that, unlike President George W. Bush, whom Gates described as a man of ‘character...convictions...and...action’, Obama and his aides gave a great deal of thought to the political implications of presidential

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<sup>189</sup> Singh, op. cit., p. 86; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 220; Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 61; Mann (2012), p. 140.

<sup>190</sup> Mann, op. cit., pp. 140-141.

<sup>191</sup> Gates, op. cit., p. 376.



decisions, the surge decision included;<sup>192</sup> and this was something for which Petraeus disliked many of Obama's inner circle and consequently did not give much weight to their politically driven pieces of advice.<sup>193</sup>

The finding of this thesis also disagrees with Mann saying Obama believed in the legitimacy and necessity of the Afghanistan War *up to the first year of his presidency*. He believed in it up to now (October 2014 and beyond), but not the way the military wanted him: win at any cost. He wanted a smaller presence in Afghanistan with limited objectives compatible to US national security interests; a limited presence to enable the US to hunt terrorism and to strengthen the capacity of the Afghanistan government to fight the war with TB.<sup>194</sup>

The finding of this thesis, however, partly agrees with Mann and Stephen Wayne's assertion that the final decision was consistent with Obama's belief system.<sup>195</sup> It agrees partly because the decision was in line with Obama's belief system but not the one Wayne referred to, the old one (the Afghanistan War was a 'good' war and hence more resources needed to put it right), but the one Obama developed during the Af-Pak review. As seen in section three, Obama developed doubts about the Afghanistan War. He, nevertheless, knew that Afghanistan was *relevant* in relation to their goal to disrupt, degrade and defeat AQ; it was relevant for their counterterrorism campaign. He also feared that an Afghanistan overtaken by TB, despite Biden's argument to the contrary, would prove detrimental to US national security interests, as well as to him and his party's future political security. But he found it difficult to agree with the military that the US would stabilise Afghanistan due to the 'Pakistan problem', the absence of good governance, the presence of an incompetent ANSF, and the wavering NATO support.<sup>196</sup> When Obama said that the US would work with Pakistan to go against terrorist sanctuaries, he himself did not believe it would happen.<sup>197</sup> In short, Obama did not believe the strategy would work. He was 'outright convinced' that it would fail.<sup>198</sup> For Obama, the Afghanistan War was an 'endless' civil war (no longer

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid., pp. 96, 349-350.

<sup>193</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 158.

<sup>194</sup> Obama (December 1, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>195</sup> Wayne, Stephen J., 'Presidential Character and Judgment: Obama's Afghanistan and Health Care Decisions', *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (June), 2011, pp. 291-305, pp. 291-292.

<sup>196</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 320; Baker (December 5, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>197</sup> Stolberg and Cooper, op. cit.

<sup>198</sup> Gates, op. cit., pp. 483, 496.

necessary or good), and, of course, an endless war by its definition could not be won.<sup>199</sup> He wanted to bring an end to a scenario where US forces were involved in fighting a civil war in favour of the Karzai Government against the TB.<sup>200</sup> It was an Afghan war and should therefore be fought by the Afghans with light US financial, political and technical support. According to Gates, Obama's political and philosophical preferences conflicted with his own pro-war public rhetoric during the presidential campaign.<sup>201</sup>

Michael O'Hanlon and Singh asserted that Obama's decision demonstrated to the US public and Congress that he was now beginning to end the war that had fatigued them, though simultaneously trying to 'be muscular enough to create a chance to win the war while at the same time keeping the war's critics acquiescent'.<sup>202</sup> Obama, however, never intended to send a message that the US intended to 'win'. During the research for this thesis, the author never came across a sentence in which Obama, after becoming President, mentioned the word 'winning'. Unlike the military, he did not believe that the US would win the way the military believed (defeat TB and establish a stable Afghanistan). For Obama, the definition of success in Afghanistan was handing over responsibility to the Afghans.<sup>203</sup> The war could go on, or be a stalemate, but as long as the Afghan state, however inadequate, was able to safeguard US national interests (the US and the allies being safe) Obama was more than happy. Unlike Bush Junior, Obama was 'unsentimental and capable of being ruthless', someone who intellectualised everything and felt little inwardly. Unlike Bush, Obama lacked passion about the Afghanistan War and the mission the military forces were fighting for.<sup>204</sup> Unlike the military, Obama did not seem to be concerned about Afghans, their security, or their human rights. Nor did he think in moral terms: that is, it was US moral duty to bring about a stable, secure and fully democratic Afghanistan. It is not that he did not desire these fortunes for Afghanistan, but, due to US political and economic realities, as well as Afghanistan's own complexities, he saw their achievements as impossible. Obama's views (and, of course, Biden's), interestingly, were similar to those of Rumsfeld,<sup>205</sup> whereas

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<sup>199</sup> Obama (December 1, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Gates, op. cit., p. 568.

<sup>202</sup> O'Hanlon quoted in Singh, op. cit., p. 75; O'Hanlon (2010), op. cit.

<sup>203</sup> Kerry (December 3, 2009), op. cit.

<sup>204</sup> Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 38; Gates, op. cit., pp. 298-299.

<sup>205</sup> A cheap strategy that did not strategically over-stretch the US on a catastrophic scale. According to Dodge and Redman, the awkward question that emerged in the Af-Pak review but nobody raised it

Petraeus sounded more like President Bush Junior. Obama did not see leaving a stable and secure Afghanistan to be the responsibility of the US. He sounded frustrated when Petraeus suggested that it was. The difference between the President and the military leaders was simple: Petraeus and McChrystal wanted to win the war by defeating TB, even if it took another decade,<sup>206</sup> whereas all Obama wanted was to end the war by withdrawing;<sup>207</sup> though a politically responsible withdrawal. Obama had received good praise from the American public (and arguably won the presidency on his opposition to the Iraq War) for having begun to end the Iraq War, while Petraeus had received praise for having turned a failing war into a relative success. The President and his general, therefore, saw their success in different outcomes for Afghanistan. The caveat was something that Obama saw as a weapon to bring the Afghanistan War to a responsible end. It was also something that reassured the Democratic Party, his advisors, and the public that the commitment was not open-ended. But Petraeus saw the caveat as insignificant because, in mid-2011, troops would be withdrawn on the basis of the conditions (which were added due to his insistence) in the theatre, and if he showed progress (as seen, he was optimistic he would), he would postpone the withdrawal.

At this stage, however, it was too early to decide whose bureaucratic positions and belief systems and images prevailed. It was also difficult to ascertain what exactly the strategy was. It all depended on the evaluation in the twelve months and then in July 2011. Numerous factors in 2011 – the accuracy of assumptions by the two opposing sides, bureaucratic positions of the policymakers, political realities within the US and outside, the level of terrorists' threats within the US, a possible nuclear war between Pakistan and India, and many others – would determine which way US strategy would lean: a COIN-S or a CT-plus-S. But as things stood in December 2009, the Biden camp considered itself and consequently Obama the winner, whereas the Petraeus camp alleged it was the military. Many, however, claimed that Obama aimed to make both sides happy due to the divided domestic pressure. This thesis concludes that Obama, as far as *long-term* US involvement was concerned, made none but himself happy: in accordance with his belief system and images of the Afghanistan War, his decision set out a policy trajectory to considerably

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explicitly was: 'What if the Bush administration had it right the first time' by avoiding 'an ambitiously defined Afghanistan mission', op. cit., p. 57

<sup>206</sup>Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 222.

<sup>207</sup> Gates, op. cit., pp. 229, 557.

narrow US involvement in Afghanistan; a policy that, due to its limits, could not guarantee success in its implementation phase. The reason he could not act upon his belief system and images for the decision to surge in 2009 was due to bureaucratic politics and the pressure by domestic actors. The three variables had even more influence upon the resulting policy when the decision-making process became more and more public.

# THE DECISION TO WITHDRAW

## INTRODUCTION

In June, 2011, Obama made the decision to withdraw the 30,000 US troops by the end of 2012, and the rest by 2014. The decision, in effect, marked the beginning of the end of the US's longest war, the Afghanistan War, highlighting the last turning point in US Afghan policy. While most, if not all, US forces would leave by the end of 2014, the decision set out US long-term policy for the next decade and beyond. Following the Foreign Policy Decision-Making (FPDM) Approach, this chapter analyses the 'why', 'how' and 'what' questions relating the decision to withdraw in 2011.

As seen in the previous chapter, the surge in 2009 had three components to it: military, civilian and diplomatic. There were numerous assumptions that each pillar of the strategy carried. Most of these assumptions, however, were doubted by the Biden group in 2009. Biden and his group in turn made their own assumptions during the Af-Pak review. The accuracy or otherwise of these assumptions was *directly* linked to Obama's decision to draw down. Section one therefore examines which sides' assumptions proved mistaken, and why and how. In its critical analysis, the section is of the view that most, if not all, assumptions made by the military leaders regarding the civilian and diplomatic surges, as well as Pakistan, were illusory. And most assumptions made by the Biden camp proved accurate. Section two gives consideration to the viewpoints (which equally represented the public debate over the Afghanistan War) that existed during the decision to withdraw. It concludes that the damaging rift over the Afghanistan War from 2009 carried over to 2011. Section three shines a light on the decision itself. Domestic influences, bureaucratic politics, personal traits, especially belief systems and images, and most importantly, the false assumptions are independent variables shown to have influenced the decision-making and consequently the resulting decision. It reveals that the false assumptions by the military proved very detrimental to the military leaders and its counter-insurgency strategy (COIN-S) in Afghanistan, and considerably reduced the bureaucratic standing of Petraeus. Dire economic conditions within the US, mounting pressure from Congress, especially from the

Democrats, the unfavourable views of Americans about the Afghanistan War were equally impactful on the resulting decision. The decision was also consistent with Obama's belief system: he managed to pave the way for a narrow counterterrorism strategy (CT-S) and, eventually, for a US exit. Section three also considers the 'what' question, that is, what US long-term policy towards Afghanistan became in 2011, as well as providing some concluding remarks on the impact of the abovementioned three independent variables on the decision to withdraw.

## 6.1. THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE – ASSUMPTIONS MEET REALITY

### 6.1.1. *The Military Surge*

Clearing insurgent strongholds in Helmand and Kandahar took longer than McChrystal had expected. Though with high costs of US lives and treasures, US forces cleared these strongholds but they held and continued to hold them. There was no prospect of building and, most importantly, transferring them to the Afghans because, as had been assumed by the Biden camp, the Afghan Government did not provide enough Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) (and civil governance); those provided were mostly incompetent and corrupt. Though the military surge was successful in facilitating the conditions to train 79,000 additional ANSF in 2010, bringing the total to 305,000, the ANSF continued to have numerous shortcomings (including illiteracy, pervasive drug addictions, lacking skills, lacking representation, dropping out, and TB's infiltration into the security forces, who turned their guns against their Western advisors before defecting to TB),<sup>1</sup> and many doubted their ability to take over and sustain the newly liberated strongholds without US forces. So US forces had to be present for years to ensure the Afghans built the areas cleared.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Though Karzai and many Afghans, including the author, would disagree with most of the above descriptions of the ANSF: Karzai, Hamid, Full text of the Interview by President Hamid Karzai with the Russian Media. [Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. May 5, 2012. <<http://president.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/FulltextoftheInterviewbyPresidentHamidKarzaiwiththeRussianMedia1452012154150781553325325.pdf>>

<sup>2</sup> Obama, Barack. [2010]. Statement by the President on the Afghanistan-Pakistan Annual Review. [The White House]. <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/12/16/statement-president-afghanistan-pakistan-annual-review>>; Obama, 'Overview of the Afghanistan and Pakistan Annual Review'. [The White House]. <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/12/16/overview-afghanistan-and-pakistan-annual-review>>; 'The Afghan War Review,' *The New York Times*, December 16, 2010; 'One-year review is mixed on Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy,' *The Washington Post*, December 16, 2010; 'Pentagon Says Afghan Forces Still Need Assistance,' *The Washington Post*, December 10, 2010; Blackwill, Robert D, 'Plan B in Afghanistan: Why a De Facto Partition Is the Least Bad Option,' *Foreign Affairs*,

As US forces launched their military campaign to clear TB strongholds in the south, the insurgents, against the military's assumption, infiltrated previously calm parts of Afghanistan, such as the north, north-east, and provinces around south and south-east of Kabul,<sup>3</sup> posing a significant threat to the capital and to the highways connecting the capital to the latter provinces. It was insecurity, as opposed to security, that worked like 'ink-blot' and spread to all parts of Afghanistan.<sup>4</sup>

Obama's 'surge and drawdown' strategy, which demonstrated a lack of resolve from the Obama Administration, was deemed to be another impediment to the establishment of McChrystal's objectives, especially the provision of security. It negatively affected perceptions in Afghanistan and the region, making the Afghan officials and warlords steal as much as they could because they were unsure of the future, hurting the possibility of a peace deal with the TB since the latter believed the US was on the verge of leaving, harming economic confidence on the grounds that investors would hardly commit to long-term

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January/February, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67026/robert-d-blackwill/plan-b-in-afghanistan>>; Bird, Tim and Alex Marshall. 2011. *Afghanistan: how the west lost its way*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 240; Kerry, John F., Opening Statement, 'Chairman Kerry Welcomes Progress In Afghanistan, Announce New Oversight Hearings,' *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, December 16, 2010, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/chair/release/chairman-kerry-welcomes-progress-in-afghanistan-announces-new-oversight-hearings>>; Kerry, 'Getting the transition right', *The Boston Globe*, May 1, 2011; O'Hanlon, Michael, 'Staying Power: The U.S. Mission in Afghanistan Beyond 2011', *The Brookings Institution*, September/October, 2010 <<http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2010/08/25-afghanistan-ohanlon>>; Feldman, Daniel, 'Testimony Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Daniel Feldman U.S. Department of State Before the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on International Development and Foreign Assistance, Economic Affairs and International Environmental Protection "Afghanistan: Right Sizing the Development Footprint"', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, September 8, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Feldman%20Testimony.pdf>>; Mann, Jim. 2012. *The Obamians: the struggle inside the White House to redefine American power*. New York: Viking, p. 317; Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. 2012. *Little America: the war for Afghanistan*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, pp. 141-143, 246; Woodward, Bob. 2010. *Obama's wars*. New York: Simon & Schuster, pp. 340, 349; Kaplan, Fred, 'The End of the Age of Petraeus; The Rise and Fall of Counterinsurgency', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2013, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138459/fred-kaplan/the-end-of-the-age-of-petraeus>>; Neumann, Ronald E., 'Hearing on Afghanistan: What is an Acceptable End-State, and How Do We Get There?', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 3, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/afghanistan-what-is-an-acceptable-end-state-and-how-do-we-get-there>>

<sup>3</sup> Transcript of the interview by Australian TV (SBS) with H.E. President Hamid Karzai. [Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. February 14, 2012. <<http://president.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/TranscriptoftheinterviewbyAustralianTVwithPresidentKarzai252201216391795553325325.pdf>>; Dodge, Toby, and Nicholas Redman. 2011. *Afghanistan: to 2015 and beyond*, London: *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Kagan, Frederick, Kimberly Kagan, 'The Case for Continuing the Counterinsurgency Campaign In Afghanistan', *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research*, December 16, 2011, <<http://www.criticalthreats.org/afghanistan/kagan-case-continuing-counterinsurgency-campaign-december-16-2011>>; DeYoung, Karen. 'Without large U.S. force after 2014, Afghanistan is headed for civil war, opposition leader warns', *The Washington Post*, November 17, 2011; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 327.

investments in a country whose future security was uncertain, and, most importantly, making friends, including US military leaders in Afghanistan nervous and confused about US long-term intentions, and foes, the Pakistani Army in particular, bold and aggressive by thinking that the US would leave in July, 2011. In short, it turned every problem into a crisis, proving detrimental to reversing the sense of doom among the Afghans.<sup>5</sup>

In summary, the military surge was unable to preserve the Afghans from the violence perpetrated by TB and others, and Karzai continued to criticise the US for failing to provide security to the Afghans.<sup>6</sup>

#### 6.1.2. The Civilian Surge

McChrystal's COIN campaign focused primarily on 81 out of 400 districts in Afghanistan, most of them in the south, and, due to the lack of human capital and the presence of endemic corruption, only ten would receive representatives from the Afghan Government by the end of 2010, and another 10 by the end of 2011.<sup>7</sup> McChrystal's assumption that he had 'a government in the box, ready to roll in' proved wrong, owing to the government being 'illusory'.<sup>8</sup> According to John Kael Weston, Brigadier General Larry Nicholson's political advisor from the State Department in Helmand, the Marines in Helmand did not fail, as they cleared and held areas, but the Afghan Government failed because it lacked the capacity and willingness to seize the opportunity provided by American troops.<sup>9</sup> Thus the Afghan Government was unable to provide basic services *in the areas cleared* by the military in Helmand and Kandahar, failing to build upon the gains the military had made. Providing

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<sup>5</sup> Neumann (May 3, 2011), op. cit.; Bernard Gwetzman Interviews Max Boot. 'The Road to Negotiation in Afghanistan', *the Council on Foreign Relations*, October 18, 2010; Kilcullen, David, 'Perspectives on Reconciliation Options in Afghanistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, 2010, July 27, 2010, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/perspectives-on-reconciliation-options-in-afghanistan>>; Neumann, Ronald, Stephen Hadley and John D. Podesta, 'Afghan Endgame: How to Help Kabul Stand on Its Own', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December, 2012, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138215/ronald-e-neumann-stephen-hadley-and-john-d-podesta/afghan-endgame>>; O'Hanlon, op. cit.; Biddle, Stephen, 'Q&A with Stephen Biddle on Afghanistan', *Foreign Affairs*, August 11, 2010, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/discussions/interviews/qa-with-stephen-biddle-on-afghanistan>>; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 129; Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 62; Singh, op. cit., p. 75; Bird, Tim and Alex Marshall. 2011. *Afghanistan: how the west lost its way*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 236.

<sup>6</sup> Transcript of Interview by President Karzai with CBS Correspondent Lara Logan. [Office of the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. September 4, 2012.

<<http://president.gov.af/en/documents/category/interviews?page=2>>

<sup>7</sup> O'Hanlon (2010), op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> Kaplan, op. cit.

<sup>9</sup> Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 143.



good governance in those contested areas had been one of the goals of the COIN-S in Afghanistan, but remained unachieved.

The overall objective of the civilian surge of the suggested COIN-S was to preserve the Afghans from corruption and criminality in the Afghan Government. But the Afghan Government continued to suffer from pervasive corruption, criminality, warlordism, favouritism and lack of accountability. In fact, corruption increased as Afghanistan in 2010 was ranked as the second most corrupt country by the report of Transparency International.<sup>10</sup> The poor relationship between the US and the most 'troublesome' ally the US had since WWII,<sup>11</sup> Karzai, is said to be one of the most crucial reasons that little progress was made on the political side of the strategy, markedly on Karzai's promises to curb corruption.<sup>12</sup> It was caused by numerous factors, including Karzai's disagreement with US Afghan policy, including with some, if not most, aspects of the military and civilian surges.<sup>13</sup> Incidentally, the disagreement had started in 2005, but became more public during the Obama Administration.<sup>14</sup> So the analysis below is also relevant to the Bush Administration's Afghan policy.

Firstly, for the 'pacifist' Karzai, the roots of the problems did not lie in the Afghan villages and provinces, but over the borders in Pakistan which had the ideological, financial, motivational, political and military centres of terrorism that enabled the infiltration of insurgents into Afghanistan. The US should stop killing innocent Afghans, argued Karzai, and instead find a strategy to deal with Pakistan's double game and the sanctuaries.<sup>15</sup> Since the sanctuaries were not addressed, Karzai was 'outright convinced' that the strategy would fail.<sup>16</sup> Secondly, Karzai clearly seemed to be at a loss to ascertain *what* really the US goal in Afghanistan was! Karzai was told by the Americans that TB was not their enemy anymore and that AQ was not present in Afghanistan. If TB were not an enemy, and if there was no

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<sup>10</sup> Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 239. The same was the case in 2012, Saikal, Amin. 2014. *Zone of crisis: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Iraq*. London: I. B. Tauris, p. 11.

<sup>11</sup> Gates, Robert Michael. 2014. *Duty: memoirs of a Secretary at war*, p. 470.

<sup>12</sup> Neumann (2011), op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> Full Transcript of President Karzai's Interview with Washington Post. [Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. March 3, 2014. <<http://president.gov.af/en/documents?page=1>>

<sup>14</sup> Full Transcript of President Karzai's interview with IRD. [Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. April 5, 2014, <<http://president.gov.af/en/documents?page=1>>

<sup>15</sup> Full transcript of President Karzai's interview with Aryn Baker from Time Magazine. [Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. May 13, 2012.

<<http://president.gov.af/en/documents/category/interviews?page=2>>; Karzai's interview with *the Washington Post* (March 3, 2014), op. cit.; Blackwill, op. cit.; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 165.

<sup>16</sup> Gates, op. cit., p. 496.

AQ present in Afghanistan, why were American forces in Afghanistan, and who were they fighting? For Karzai, especially National Security Advisor Rangan Spanta, those TB who were killing innocent Afghans, burning schools, and destroying crops on a daily basis were terrorists. For the Afghan Government, defeating TB was more important than defeating AQ, whose very existence Karzai doubted. For Karzai, the Afghanistan War was not an insurgency but a war on terrorism. If the former, then it was an Afghan issue and the US should not be in the country to support one brother against another.<sup>17</sup>

Thirdly, Karzai continuously pleaded with the US to put a stop to their collateral damage, night raids, American prisons, the use of dogs on patrols, body searches of Afghan women, and other human rights abuses. These highly sensitive issues to Karzai, most importantly, collateral damage, became a major source of friction between the Afghan President and the Obama Administration. The Americans consistently told Karzai and the media how sorry they were, that wars had collateral damage, and that they worked hard to minimise it. But 'sorry' was hardly good enough for the Afghans. Karzai felt that the Afghans wanted answers from him as an elected leader. But the Americans seemed to have been not doing enough, or even *not* listening to Karzai. Karzai had raised the issue of collateral damage as far back as 2006, but in the view of Karzai nothing effective had been done yet. Karzai had raised the problem of security companies in 2006, but only in 2010 the US offered a plan to deal with them when the presence of those companies became a crisis. Security firms with 40,000 personnel had created a parallel structure to the police, yet they were hardly accountable to the Afghan Government. McChrystal said in 2013 that US and coalition forces fought a war almost by themselves, hardly involving the Afghan Government in *making* (not just in Afghanistan but also in Washington) and *implementing* the strategy.

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<sup>17</sup>Full Transcript of President Karzai's Interview with BBC Newsnight. [Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. October 03, 2013.

<<http://president.gov.af/en/documents/category/interviews?page=1>>; Transcript of Interview by President Karzai with CBS Correspondent Lara Logan. [Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. September 4, 2012. <<http://president.gov.af/en/documents/category/interviews?page=2>>; Transcript of Interview by President Karzai with Newsweek.[Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. January 3, 2012.

<<http://president.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/TranscriptofInterviewbyPresidentKarzaiwithNewsweek1012012201158906553325325.pdf>>; Karzai's interview with IRD (April 5, 2014), op. cit.; Karzai's interview with the Washington Post (March 3, 2014), op. cit.; Karzai's interview with CBC (September 4, 2012), op. cit.; Karzai's interview with the Russian Media (May 5, 2012), op. cit.; Christia, Fotini, Michael Semple, 'Flipping the Taliban; How to Win in Afghanistan', *Foreign Affairs*, July/August, 2009, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65151/fotini-christia-and-michael-semble/flipping-the-taliban>>

As a result, the Afghan President was sidelined and did not have a meaningful role. Karzai wanted to be a partner not a 'stooge', who would keep quiet if a wrong was committed by the US. Since he felt he was not treated like a partner, Karzai had no choice but to turn to the media and publicly criticise America. The 'nationalist' Karzai, who, according to Gates, 'resented' the US, was well aware of the Afghan history, and sensitive to what was being said about him, *especially* by the Afghans. If he did not side with the Afghans on those sensitive issues, he would also have been ranked as another 'foreign puppet' like Shah Shujah and Babrak Karmal: the former invited Great Britain in 1839, and the latter the Soviet Union in 1979. In the last years of Karzai's tenure in office, he clearly made attempts to distance himself from being called an 'American puppet'.<sup>18</sup> In doing so, at times his negative reaction towards the US seemed excessive, but Karzai was right to claim that these human rights abuses strengthened TB and other anti-coalition forces.

Fourthly, the presence of warlords likewise bolstered the number of TB fighters, and Karzai put the blame on the US for nurturing the warlordism strategy. To sustain his government, Karzai in the early years of US intervention wanted to use the threat of US forces to have warlords removed, but the Bush Administration, particularly Rumsfeld, disagreed, telling Karzai to use political appointments and spoils instead of the use of the threat of US troops. Throughout its administration, Bush and his advisors employed the warlord strategy, and consequently, by 2010, the Afghan Government was mostly made up of warlords and tribal leaders. Moreover, being convinced that the US (Holbrooke's support of Ashraf Ghani) was out there to remove him, Karzai made more deals with many strongmen by offering them a percentage of seats in return for their support for his candidacy in the 2009 presidential election. Thus it was unrealistic and too late in 2010 to

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<sup>18</sup> Full Transcript of President Hamid Karzai's Interview with Al Jazeera TV in Doha, Qatar. [Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. March 31, 2013. <<http://president.gov.af/en/documents/category/interviews?page=1>>; Transcript of Interview by President Karzai with Wall Street Journal conducted by Yaroslav Trofimov and Matt Murray. [Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. February 15, 2012. <<http://president.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/TranscriptofInterviewbyPresidentKarzaiwithWallStreetJournalconductedbyYaroslavTrofimovandMattMurray2522012162819915553325325.pdf>>; 'Transcript of President Karzai's Interview with Voice of America, English Service. [Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. July 14, 2014. <<http://president.gov.af/en/documents/category/interviews>>; Karzai's interview with the Washington Post (November 14, 2010), op. cit.; Neumann (2011), op. cit.; 'Generation Kill: A Conversation With Stanley McChrystal', *Foreign Affairs*, March/April, 2013, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/discussions/interviews/generation-kill>>; Gates, op. cit., p. 201-202, 470; Cowper-Coles, Sherard. 2011. *Cables from Kabul: the inside story of the West's Afghanistan campaign*. London: Harper Press.

blame Karzai for the strategy, and most importantly, to expect Karzai to replace corrupt strongmen and warlords with credible civil servants, especially when he knew he could not have the reliance and support of the Obama Administration. Understanding this reality, McChrystal (and Eikenberry) had no choice but to work with the strongmen in the south, east and north. In the end, the military leaders (and the civilian ones) were unable to 'protect' the Afghans from these warlords/strongmen and their criminality and corruption; safeguarding the Afghans against all evil forces had been the main objective of McChrystal's 2009 assessment. Working with these strongmen disappointed the Afghans, who went on believing that the new American leadership in Afghanistan continued to give warlords the US Government's seal of approval.<sup>19</sup>

Fifthly, Karzai equally disagreed with the Obama Administration that the solution to curbing corruption lay with himself. Karzai believed that the lack of oversight on large contracts offered by the West, money distributed to warlords and strongmen by the CIA, and money given out by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) were the main cause of corruption.<sup>20</sup> Karzai, however, admitted the presence of petty or bureaucratic corruption in the Afghan Government, but due to Afghanistan having a high inflation rate, it was unrealistic to expect Karzai to put a stop to it. If the salary of a civil servant (approximately \$100 per month) was not enough to pay for the accommodation alone (about \$300 per month for a three-bedroom house or apartment), how was he meant to provide other basic needs for his family? Instead of understanding Afghanistan and its situation, instead of admitting that corruption was partly the result of certain US strategies,<sup>21</sup> the Obama Administration publicly blamed (and humiliated) Karzai

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<sup>19</sup>Full transcript of President Karzai's interview with Aryn Baker from Time Magazine. [Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. May 13, 2012. <<http://president.gov.af/en/documents/category/interviews?page=2>>; Arreguin-Toft, Ivan, 'Washington Colonial Conundrum in Afghanistan; Why the United States Cannot Stay Forever?' *Foreign Affairs*, 2011, December 15, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136881/ivan-arreguin-toft/washingtons-colonial-conundrum-in-afghanistan>>; Neumann, Ronald, Stephen Hadley and John D. Podesta, 'Afghan Endgame: How to Help Kabul Stand on Its Own', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December, 2012, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138215/ronald-e-neumann-stephen-hadley-and-john-d-podesta/afghan-endgame>>; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., pp. 86, 262-263; Baker, Kim, 'Letter From Kabul: Solving Afghanistan's Problems; What the United States Must Overcome in Afghanistan', *Foreign Affairs*, 2009, November 30, 2009, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/features/letters-from/letter-from-kabul-solving-afghanistans-problems>>; Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 27; Gannon, Kathy, 'Afghanistan Unbound', *Foreign Affairs*, May/June, 2004, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/59891/kathy-gannon/afghanistan-unbound>>; Gates, op. cit., p. 358.

<sup>20</sup>The CIA would refuse to put a stop to it, Gates, op. cit., p. 501.

<sup>21</sup> Though Gates and Clinton privately agreed and raised the issue in several NSC meetings but to no avail, Gates, op. cit., pp. 359-60.

for corruption and lack of effective governance, demanding a change to ‘good governance’ that was far more complete, and therefore unrealistic, than the situation in any of the neighbouring countries. Whilst the Bush Administration used all carrots and no sticks, the Obama Administration used it the other way around, effectively working not with Karzai, but against him. The administration’s assumption that pressuring Karzai would change his behaviour backfired since Karzai became resentful of the US and the West’s continued criticism, and instead blamed the US for everything that had gone wrong in Afghanistan, including corruption. Karzai knew that toughening his stance would make him even more popular with the Afghans.<sup>22</sup>

Sixthly, Karzai did not support the decentralisation component of the strategy. Almost every expert on Afghanistan in 2011 wanted its acceleration due to the surge having produced no tangible results. For them, it could also prove to be a quick way out of Afghanistan for US forces. They suggested a variety of decentralised models, ranging from ‘decentralised democracy’ to ‘internal mixed sovereignty’ to a ‘de facto partition of Afghanistan’.<sup>23</sup> The importance of decentralisation, however, was overstated and lacked understanding. During the King era (1933-73), used by almost every expert to justify the assumption, there were governmental or *central* branches in every district of Afghanistan. True, many decisions were made by the communities or tribal authorities, but if a community could not solve a matter, or if the claimant preferred to take the matter to a branch of government (i.e. the police), the matter would become official, no matter how far

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<sup>22</sup> Transcript of President Karzai’s Interview with Danish DR TV. [Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. May 2, 2013. <<http://president.gov.af/en/documents/category/interviews?page=1>>; Kim Baker, op. cit.; Karzai’s interview with *The Washington Post* (November 14, 2010), op. cit.; Karzai’s interview with CBC (September 4, 2012), op. cit.; Karzai’s interview with IRD (April 5, 2014), op. cit.; Neumann (2011), op. cit.; Karzai’s interview with Times Magazine (May 13, 2012), op. cit.; Gates, op. cit., p. 202; Biddle, Stephen, ‘Q&A with Stephen Biddle on Afghanistan’, *Foreign Affairs*, August 11, 2010, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/discussions/interviews/qa-with-stephen-biddle-on-afghanistan>>; Crocker, Ryan C., ‘Perspectives on Reconciliation Options in Afghanistan’, *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, July 27, 2010, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/perspectives-on-reconciliation-options-in-afghanistan>>

<sup>23</sup> Blank, Jonah, ‘Q&A With Jonah Blank on Afghanistan; The ‘Best-Case Scenario’ for the United States’, *Foreign Affairs*, 2011, September 7, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/discussions/interviews/qa-with-jonah-blank-on-afghanistan>>; Jones, Seth G., ‘It Takes the Villages: Bringing Change From Below in Afghanistan’, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June, 2010, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/66350/seth-g-jones/it-takes-the-villages>>; Biddle, Stephen, ‘Running out of time for Afghan Governance Reform; How Little Can We Live With?’ *Foreign Affairs*, 2011, December 15, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136875/stephen-biddle/running-out-of-time-for-afghan-governance-reform>>; Kerry, John F. ‘Steps Needed for a Successful 2014 Transition in Afghanistan’, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 10, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/steps-needed-for-a-successful-2014-transition-in-afghanistan>>; Blackwill, op. cit.

away the village was located in Afghanistan. In fact, the tribal authority would use central government as a threat to solve a matter in hand. In short, contrary to what experts said, the central government's authority *extended* to all parts of Afghanistan,<sup>24</sup> and Afghans were obedient to its will. Suppose, for the sake of the argument, that the assumption was correct, and suppose that the Afghans accepted the decentralised model,<sup>25</sup> the question is where that tribal or local authority (e.g. shuras and jirgas) could with 'the popular rule' be found? Most of these tribal elders were either killed or forced to flee Afghanistan by the Soviets. Those who had survived the Soviet invasion were forced out of the scene, either by the warlords during the early 1990s, or by the TB regime during the late-1990s. In places where TB had control during the surge period, it was only one power that exercised authority: the Sharia Law implemented by a TB commander. A TB commander was a policeman, a judge and an executor, or, in other words, 'the tribal authority'. Most TB commanders were young men in their late-teens or early twenties, and they believed that their ancestors had not been true to Islam. Instead of having fully followed the Sharia Law, the ancestors had followed the *Pashtunwali* (the code of conduct for the Pashtun people) and other Afghan traditional rules – given their strict interpretation of Islamic law, they declared incompatible parts of *Pashtunwali* and other traditional rules to the Sharia Law. Those elderly people who stood against their decisions were either silenced or assassinated. On the other hand, in those places where warlords governed, it was a warlord, like a TB commander, who had all three separate powers. If more powers were given to these strongmen, it would further distance Afghans from their government. It would be a repeat of 1992-96 in which each warlord controlled his own area with an iron fist, and Afghans were left with no choice but to welcome TB to get rid of the abuse and criminality perpetuated by some of those warlords. In fact, Biddle's internal mixed model was nothing but a repeat of the Mujahedeen era of 1992-96. If his model was applied, the US would be dealing with a Karzai in every province and district. Blackwill's model of 'de facto partition of Afghanistan' was even more outrageous and impractical, and, if applied, to say the least, the bloody experience of India-

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<sup>24</sup> The following Afghan sources clearly validate my point: Ghobar, Ghulam Mohammad. 1999. *Afghanistan in the Course of History*, Virginia, USA [in Dari]; Farhang, Sadeeq. 1988. *Afghanistan in the last five centuries* [in Dari]; Tanin, Zahir. 2005. *Afghanistan in the twentieth century; 1900-1996*, M. Abraham Shareehi [in Dari]; Kazem, Said Abdullah. 2005. *Afghan Women Under the Pressure of Tradition and Modernisation*, California, USA [in Dari].

<sup>25</sup> In the King era, the central government had fewer resources and was little responsive for development compared to the Karzai government, the Afghan sources, Ibid.

Pakistan Partition would be repeated, considering there are non-Pashtuns in the south and east, and Pashtuns in the north and west. It is true that these are only theories advocated by area experts. But, as seen, some of them, such as Biddle, had played important parts in influencing policymakers during the Af-Pak review. The decentralisation part of the strategy had been advocated by those theorists, and the Af-Pak review turned it into a policy. But most Afghans were against these theories, including Karzai. Karzai was sick and tired of these so-called new ideas being experimented every two or three years in Afghanistan. For Karzai, Afghanistan was not a laboratory in which the US (or theoreticians) tried to experiment with their new ideas. All of these ideas were proposed having US interests in mind. All were made in America without taking account of the realities on the ground. A new idea had to be a new evolution created by the Afghans, not by 'superficially informed foreigners' who tried to re-create 'a partially mythical past' that they neither understood well, nor could feasibly apply.<sup>26</sup>

What Afghanistan needed was a strong and centralised government – with all the necessary governmental functions in the hands of the central Government in Kabul – to minimise the risk of a civil war by keeping a tight control over the strong men; empowering a strong centre over rural areas which had less interest in human rights and other democratic ideals; providing decisive action against terrorists; making rational investments in the national economic infrastructure; and working towards a regional solution, as well as a peace settlement with the TB.<sup>27</sup> Biddle himself admitted most of the above advantages of a centralised Afghanistan, but believed it could not be achieved.<sup>28</sup>

Seventhly, one aspect of the decentralisation was training local forces to defend their local areas because Obama did not want US forces to play the role of sheriff in every street or village in Afghanistan. But local forces were to be made up of opposing tribes, who did not get on with each other. Empowering these tribes could facilitate conditions in which

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<sup>26</sup> President Karzai: Afghanistan not Political Lab for New Experiments by Foreigners. [Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. January 21, 2012. <<http://president.gov.af/en/news/6409>>; Frogh, Wazhma, 'Afghans can't trust anyone', *The Guardian*, September 22, 2009; Neumann (2011), op. cit.; Karzai's interview with CBC (September 4, 2012), op. cit.

<sup>27</sup> Karzai's interview with CBC (September 4, 2012), op. cit.; Neumann (2012), op. cit.; Bergen, Peter, 'Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and Other Extremist Groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 24, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/al-qaeda-the-taliban-and-other-extremist-groups-in-afghanistan-and-pakistan>>; Jawad, Said T., 'Hunting Al Qaeda', *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2007, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/62834/said-t-jawad/hunting-al-qaeda>>

<sup>28</sup> Biddle (May 10, 2011), op. cit.; Biddle (December 15, 2011), op. cit.

they would fight with each other once again, rob ordinary Afghans on the highway, or even, as the Dostum militia had done in 1992, turn against the central government itself. Karzai and Afghans remembered that it was a combination of these militia and Mujahedeen groups that fought with each other, causing the bloody civil war of 1992-96. The Afghans had been sick and tired of the criminality and infighting of these militias and Mujahedeen to the extent that they welcomed TB, whose main goal was to cleanse society of all militias and their criminality and abuse. Karzai and most Afghans did not want militias anymore, and when it was proposed, it aroused Afghans' suspicion that the US was up to something. Karzai saw this aspect of the strategy, as well as working with 'local leaders' in an attempt to divide Afghanistan into many small states. What Karzai and most Afghans wanted was a well-equipped (including air power and modern weaponry), well-trained and well-entrenched ANSF (in the long run, shorter in number, though, so that Afghan taxpayers could afford to pay their salaries) that represented all Afghan ethnicities.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, the presence of Holbrooke and Eikenberry added more complications to the relationship. Holbrooke launched a failed coup to replace Karzai with Ashraf Ghani, or at the very least, create two governments, one run by Karzai and the other by a 'Chief Executive', who would accept all US conditions. Both civilian ambassadors constantly criticised Karzai, treating him with contempt; Eikenberry's cables, leaked by WikiLeaks, called the Afghan President erratic, unpredictable, and delusional. Gates, Clinton, and Mullen were not happy with Eikenberry's treatment of Karzai and with the ambassador's constant negativity that the surge was failing, but they could not have him removed, owing to the support he received from the White House. Consequently, 'Karzai had no use for Eikenberry, Holbrooke, or Biden, and his relationship with Obama was a distant one'.<sup>30</sup> The one person Karzai liked and respected was McChrystal (and the military camp in general), who tried to listen to the Afghan President's concerns, but McChrystal was fired, even though Karzai made attempts to persuade Obama not to.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Karzai's interview with the Wall Street Journal (February 15, 2012), op. cit.; Neumann (2011), op. cit.; Salbi, Zainab, 'Perspectives on Reconciliation Options in Afghanistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, July 27, 2010, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/perspectives-on-reconciliation-options-in-afghanistan>>; Gates, op. cit., p. 559.

<sup>30</sup> Gates, op. cit., p. 484.

<sup>31</sup> Karzai's interview with *News Week* (Jan 3, 2012), op. cit.; Eikenberry Karl. W, 'US embassy cables: Karzai feared US intended to unseat him and weaken Afghanistan', July 07, 2009, <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/us-embassy-cables>>; Karzai's interview with *The Wall Street Journal* (February 15, 2012), op. cit.; McChrystal (2013), op. cit.; Karzai's interview with *The Washington*



In summary, the strategies of not treating TB as an enemy, not dealing with terrorist sanctuaries in Pakistan, creating a decentralised government, creating parallel structures to the police (security firms) and the government (NGOs and PRTs), a lack of oversight on large contracts, the inflow of CIA money to strongmen and warlords, and the weakening of Afghan resolve (or waging a psychological war) by threatening that Afghanistan would be plunged into a civil war if it did not accept US demands all made Karzai almost convinced that the US had other ulterior motives, and, in order to keep the war going on to justify its presence, it purposely weakened the Afghan institutions by actively promoting insecurity and corruption.<sup>32</sup> Reports by Afghan sources to the Afghan President added more to his conviction that the violence by TB was in the service of America. Karzai, in numerous speeches, told Afghans that he had reports that the US and NATO forces aided TB to infiltrate in the previously peaceful parts of Afghanistan such as the north, that containers were being dropped in areas beyond the reach of the Afghan Government and under the control of TB,<sup>33</sup> and that those TB who showed a willingness towards reconciliation would suddenly get arrested by the Americans. In short, Karzai found the allies to be not 'good and honest' and he seriously mistrusted their good intentions for Afghanistan. Quoting the British poet, Shelley, Karzai told *The Sunday Times*: 'I met murder on the way'.<sup>34</sup> Karzai might have been engaged in a war of words and propaganda with the Obama Administration, or certain US policies and the abovementioned reports might have *genuinely* made him believe in those conspiracy theories; his speeches, nevertheless, created a very confused environment. Afghans could not differentiate between friends and foes. Like Karzai, Afghans were 'confused' and 'bewildered' whether the US was creating 'stability' or 'instability' in Afghanistan. As the NBC reporter found out, the mistrust was *strong* and *countrywide*.<sup>35</sup> Despite hundreds of billions of US aids to Afghanistan, many Afghans, especially Karzai, still looked at the US with a suspicious eye!

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*Post* ( November 14, 2010), op. cit.; Karzai's interview with *ABC* ( October 13, 2009), op. cit.; Gates, op. cit., pp. 481-482, 484, 489.

<sup>32</sup> Full Transcript of President Karzai's Interview with British Newspaper, the Sunday Times. [Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. January 27, 2014.

<<http://president.gov.af/en/documents?page=1>>; Karzai's interview with *NBC* (December 6, 2012), op. cit.; Woodward (2010), op. cit., pp. 116-117; Karzai's interview with *BBC* (October 3, 2013), op. cit.

<sup>33</sup> Karzai's interview with *BBC* (October 3, 2013), op. cit.

<sup>34</sup> Karzai's interview with British Newspaper *Sunday Times* (Jan 27, 2014), op. cit.; Karzai's interview with *NBC* (December 6, 2012), op. cit.; Karzai's interview with *IRD* (April 5, 2014), op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> Karzai's interview with *BBC* (October 3, 2013), op. cit.; Karzai's interview with *NBC* (Dec 6, 2012), op. cit.

Due to all these deep Afghan-American differences and Karzai's mistrust of US intentions, the troublesome ally Karzai blamed the US more than TB for the violence in his country,<sup>36</sup> and did not (or, in certain cases, could not) provide the support he was meant to. In a COIN-S, the intervening power would be as good as the government it supported, and since the Karzai Government remained corrupt (and Karzai himself as unreliable as he had ever been), and the US did not have leverage over him to change his behaviour, the civilian surge for the purpose of improving governance and reducing corruption was doomed to fail.<sup>37</sup> In practical terms, this meant that the minimal success in the military surge did not mean a lot, because there was not a civilian government to provide basic services that McChrystal and Petraeus had planned as part of their supposed COIN-S.

The 'development' part of the civilian surge for the purpose of helping governance and consequently security did not produce a great deal either. Holbrooke wanted USAID to focus on agriculture, because 80 percent of working-age people in Afghanistan were small-scale farmers, and because, as assumed, it would help reduce the production of opium. So he employed a programme to help farmers with seeds and fertilisers, and USAID took responsibility to build roads so that the crops were delivered to markets – the policy was especially aimed at Helmand and Kandahar.<sup>38</sup> But this as well as other developmental efforts faced a number of challenges that did not ensure success. First, security was the biggest obstacle. As of 2003, 387 USAID staff had been killed and 658 wounded in Afghanistan, and the death toll doubled from 29 a month in 2009 to 57 a month in 2010.<sup>39</sup> Lack of security forced the security office in the US Embassy in Kabul to impose strict rules to ensure nobody working for the embassy was killed. This near-zero-risk policy prevented diplomats and USAID workers from doing their work effectively, particularly in Helmand and Kandahar.<sup>40</sup> Second, relations between Eikenberry and McChrystal, as well as their

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<sup>36</sup> Clinton, op. cit., p. 143.

<sup>37</sup> Kilcullen, David, 'Perspectives on Reconciliation Options in Afghanistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, 2010, July 27, 2010, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/perspectives-on-reconciliation-options-in-afghanistan>>; Kaplan, op. cit.

<sup>38</sup> Holbrooke, Richard C., 'Civilian Strategy for Afghanistan: A Status Report in Advance of the London Conference, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, January 21, 2010, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/HolbrookeTestimony100121p.pdf>>; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., pp. 106-108.

<sup>39</sup> Their, J. Alexander, 'Afghanistan: Right Sizing the Developmental Footprint', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, September 8, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Thier%20Testimony.pdf>>

<sup>40</sup> Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 176.

respective staff, were not good, and, generally speaking, the civilian officials from the embassy did not believe in the surge, while the military did. The different viewpoints, the deep division, remained during the surge period in Afghanistan.<sup>41</sup> Third, bureaucracy in the State Department, including the US Afghan Embassy, made the process of employing civilian staff and then deploying them to the theatre in Helmand and Kandahar very slow and time-consuming. The civilian side should have been ready to provide developmental aid after military operations were over to ensure the military effort was sustained and built upon. It was important that the Afghans saw their lives as getting better. But, due to the above obstacles, the civilian efforts (and embassy staffers who implemented those efforts) were either delayed or provided in short supply.<sup>42</sup> To make matters worse, even though Holbrooke and Clinton talked of improvements in the multifaceted anti-drugs strategy,<sup>43</sup> the facts on the ground showed that the argument did not prove correct – opium production rose considerably after 2010, its traffickers remained as powerful, its shipments carried on, and TB continued to benefit from it. This was another wrong assumption made by Clinton and Holbrooke a year and a half ago.<sup>44</sup>

### 6.1.3. *The Pakistan Problem*

A few decades back, during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which coincided with the ousting of the US-backed Government in Iran by the Islamic Revolution, Pakistan was the closest US ally in the region. Back then, the Indian Government had close relations with the Soviet Union and both supported the Communist Government in Kabul, whereas Pakistan was an ally to the US in supporting the Afghan Mujahedeen. China, at the time, was not seen by the US as big a threat as the Soviet Union, and China equally saw the Soviet Union as a potential rival. This was one critical factor that brought China and the US closer. Like the US and Pakistan, China contributed to the Mujahedeen fighting in Afghanistan. But three decades later it was India rather than Pakistan (and China) that was a 'natural if

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<sup>41</sup>Gates, op. cit., p. 380; McChrystal (2013), op. cit.; Singh, op. cit., p. 82; Hastings, Michael, 'The Rolling Stone profile of Stanley McChrystal that changed history', *The Rolling Stone*, June 22, 2010; Chandrasekaran: 218.

<sup>42</sup> Chandrasekaran, op. cit., pp. 204, 219; Gates, op. cit., p. 476

<sup>43</sup> 'Statement of Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke, Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan: Governance and the Civilian Strategy,' Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, July 14, 2010, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Holbrooke,%20Amb.%20Richard%20C1.pdf>>

<sup>44</sup>Karzai blamed the US for not tackling the mafia who pocketed 98 percent of the profit, as only one billion out of 68 billion or so went to the Afghans. Karzai implied that the West came across as if it persuaded to grow poppy rather than destroying it, Karzai's interview with *The Wall Street Journal* (February 15, 2012), op. cit.

unofficial' partner to the US. Both India and the US shared common interests. Both combated terrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan, saw China's military rise as a threat and kept an eye on it, shared intelligence, and coordinated strategy with each other. According to Mann, whenever the Obama Administration had problems with China and Pakistan, it often consulted India for 'advice, insights and help'. The realists in the Obama Administration supported the alliance because they saw India as a counterweight to China. The idealists supported the relationship because India was the biggest democracy in the world and could serve as an example for other countries. India-US closeness was reinforced when Obama did not have a stopover in Pakistan on his visit to India in 2010.<sup>45</sup>

On the other hand, Pakistan's support of the Afghan insurgency weakened two main rivals of China, India and the US, and thus China and Pakistan had become natural allies in the first decade of the 21st century. China was willing to call Pakistan 'its Israel' and support the latter's policy in the region whether it was wrong or right.<sup>46</sup> While China's policy reinforced Pakistan's sway in the region, the American presence in Afghanistan weakened it since it strengthened the pro-Indian government in Kabul, required Pakistan to give up terrorism and nuclear weapons, and strengthened the cause of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other anti-Pakistani insurgents, who used Pakistan's cooperation with the US as a justification to use violence against the state. Pakistan's support of terrorism, its nuclear weapons, and its strong security forces were its life insurance against India. It did want to give up the first two, and had no desire to sacrifice the third in a war that was not theirs, but one between AQ and the US.<sup>47</sup> For Pakistan, the support of certain radical groups, such as TB or Lashkar-e-Taiba (renamed Jamaat-ud-Dawa), proved to be effective in dealing with an Indian threat both in Afghanistan and Pakistan. For example, the militants' activity in Kashmir forced India to send 500,000 troops into the province in 2002. This way, India's military was preoccupied within its own borders, rather than being sent to Pakistan.<sup>48</sup> In

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<sup>45</sup> Mann (2012), op. cit., p. 189; Christophe, Jaffrelot, 'What engagement with Pakistan Can – And Can't – Do', *Foreign Affairs*, 2011, October 12, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136413/christophe-jaffrelot/what-engagement-with-pakistan-can-and-cant-do>>; Rashid, Ahmed. 2009. *Descent into chaos: the world's most unstable region and the threat to global security*. London: penguin, p. 123.

<sup>46</sup> 'Sweat as can be? Even an all-weather friendship has limits', *The Economist*, May 12, 2011; Christophe, op. cit.; Brzezinski, op. cit.; Mann, op. cit.

<sup>47</sup> Christophe, op. cit.; Clinton, op. cit., p.182.

<sup>48</sup> Krasner, Stephen D, 'Talking Tough to Pakistan; How to End Islamabad's Defiance', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2012, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136696/stephen-d-krasner/talking-tough-to-pakistan>>

Afghanistan, supporting TB ensured the pro-Indian government remained weak and the insurgency undefeated, keeping Pakistan's hope alive that one day, when US forces retreated, it would again have a government of its choice in Kabul. In Pakistan, the Army used militarily and politically some of those terrorist groups, or 'poisonous snakes', to reduce and counter the influence and dangerous beliefs of the Deobandi groups (e.g. TTP), who targeted their violence against the state of Pakistan. The interests of Pakistan (and, to a certain extent, China) therefore clashed with those of the US in Afghanistan and the region.<sup>49</sup> Unsurprisingly, the Pakistani Army continued, and even intensified its efforts, to provide its different types of assistance (spelled out in chapter five) to the Afghan insurgents, and proved once more that it was of *significant* importance to any outcome in Afghanistan.<sup>50</sup> By mid-2011, the security situation became reasonably better in the south, yet the sanctuary in Pakistan did not make it possible to sustain it.<sup>51</sup> McChrystal admitted in 2013 that the safe haven in Pakistan, which had direct access to the war zone, and ineffective and corrupt government in Afghanistan, were two factors that worked against his supposed COIN-S in Afghanistan, and therefore the success of the mission was not assured.<sup>52</sup> Biden and his followers had rightly assumed that, without dealing with

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<sup>49</sup> Krepon, Michael, 'Assessing U.S. Policy and Its Limits in Pakistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 5, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/assessing-us-policy-and-its-limits-in-pakistan>>; Brzezinski, op. cit.; DeYoung, Karen, 'Without large U.S. force after 2014, Afghanistan is headed for civil war, opposition leader warns', *The Washington Post*, November 17, 2011; Fair, C. Christine, 'Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and Other Extremist Groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 24, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/al-qaeda-the-taliban-and-other-extremist-groups-in-afghanistan-and-pakistan>>

<sup>50</sup> Kerry, John, 'Chairman Kerry Opening Statement As Delivered At Hearing On "Perspectives on Reconciliation Options in Afghanistan"', *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, July 27, 2010, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/KerryStatement100727a.pdf>>; Kerry, 'Kerry Opening Statement At Hearing Titled "Al Qaeda, The Taliban, And Other Extremist Groups In Afghanistan and Pakistan"', *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 24, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/chair/release/kerry-opening-statement-at-hearing-titled-al-qaeda-the-taliban-and-other-extremist-groups-in-afghanistan-and-pakistan>>; Kerry (May 1, 2011), op. cit.; Lugar, Dick, Opening Statement for Hearing on Afghanistan', *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, December 9, 2009, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/LugarStatement091209a.pdf>>; Lugar, 'Opening Statement', 'Lugar Says Pakistan Must Adhere to Past Agreements to Fight Terrorism', *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 17, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/ranking/release/lugar-says-pakistan-must-adhere-to-past-agreements-to-fight-terrorism>>; Ahmed, Samina, 'Assessing U.S. Policy and Its Limit in Pakistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 5, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/assessing-us-policy-and-its-limits-in-pakistan>>

<sup>51</sup> Obama, Statement by the President on the Afghanistan-Pakistan Annual Review (2010), op. cit.; Obama, 'Overview of the Afghanistan and Pakistan Annual Review' (2010), op. cit.; Kerry (May 1, 2011), op. cit.; Clinton (June 23, 2011), op. cit.

<sup>52</sup> McChrystal (2013), op. cit.

sanctuaries in Pakistan, it seemed unlikely that the COIN-S would succeed to bring an end to the war.<sup>53</sup>

Pakistan did not agree with the logic that the US presence in Afghanistan ensured stability in Afghanistan, or else Pakistan would have never actively undermined US efforts in Afghanistan. The Pakistani Army, the eighth-largest in the world, remained certain that it was able to protect its stability and its nuclear weapons whether the US was present or absent in Afghanistan. But it preferred (actually aimed at) the US to abandon Afghanistan and to leave it to Pakistan.<sup>54</sup> Pakistan was much more secure and in control of the situation during the TB rule of Afghanistan (and the time of the Soviet invasion) than it was in 2010 or 2011.<sup>55</sup> If tomorrow a TB government took over in Kabul, most insurgent groups in Pakistan could move into Afghanistan, thus leaving Pakistan clear of terrorist groups. That was what happened after the TB takeover in 1996, when Pakistan killed two birds with one stone.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, in 2010 and 2011, Pakistan indirectly fought a superpower and its 49 allies but, if TB took over and the US left, it would be fighting only the regional powers with minimal support to the NA and other anti-TB groups. It would resemble a return to the 1990s, and then Pakistan had hardly been as involved as it was in 2010 and 2011.

It was true that Pakistan had its own *severe* problems, such as violent terrorism, ethnic and sectarian violence, and a floundering economy,<sup>57</sup> but these problems could not be fixed or made worse *regardless* of what the US did in Afghanistan.<sup>58</sup> Nor did US economic assistance to Pakistan effectively deal with the serious abovementioned threats to Pakistan's stability, because most US assistance went into the pockets of Pakistani officials, more than half to the wallets of the Army generals.<sup>59</sup> By Clinton's own admission, the

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<sup>53</sup> DeYoung (2011), op. cit.; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., pp. 237-238.

<sup>54</sup> Gelb, Leslie H. 'Joe Biden On Iraq, Iran, China and the Taliban', *Newsweek*, December 19, 2011, <<http://www.newsweek.com/joe-biden-iraq-iran-china-and-taliban-65953>>; Ahmed, op. cit.; Neumann (2011), op. cit.; Haass, Richard N., 'Hearing on Afghanistan: What is an Acceptable End-State, and How Do We Get There?', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 3, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/afghanistan-what-is-an-acceptable-end-state-and-how-do-we-get-there>>

<sup>55</sup> Yousaf, Mohammad, and Mark Adkin. 2007. *The battle for Afghanistan: the Soviets versus the Mujahideen during the 1980s*. Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military.

<sup>56</sup> Nojumi, Neamatollah. 2002. *The rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan: mass mobilization, civil war, and the future of the region*. New York: Palgrave.

<sup>57</sup> A long list is provided by Ahmed, op. cit.; Haass (2011), op. cit.; Nawaz, Shuja, 'The Pakistan dilemma; What the Military's Recent Behavior Says About U.S.-Pakistan Ties', *Foreign Affairs*, May 2, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67817/shuja-nawaz/the-pakistan-dilemma>>

<sup>58</sup> Leslie, op. cit.

<sup>59</sup> 13 billion in military aid 6.6 in economic assistances since 9/11. Equally, praises, criticism and begging (Mullen made twenty visits, Holbrooke 14 in the past 19 months, Clinton four, and many dozens more by

assistance did not work.<sup>60</sup> It did not even change the calculus of the Army leaders about Afghanistan.<sup>61</sup> Fortunately for the Army, the Pakistani public overwhelming (79 percent) supported it because it was ‘the only institution that is organised, capable and strong enough to hold the country together’ and able to establish security, which took precedence over governance or human rights. The Army, therefore, exercised considerable control over all sensitive areas of policy and shaped them in accordance with the military’s perceptions of national interests.<sup>62</sup> The Army, which mistrusted US intentions, not only supported certain Islamic groups, but also fuelled anti-American sentiments through the media by condemning drone strikes and US intelligence operations in Pakistan. The anti-America campaign of the military seemed to have worked, since 59 percent of Pakistanis in the Al Jazeera-Gallup poll believed that the US was the main threat, with India and Pakistani TB representing 18 percent and 11 percent, respectively. In a 2010 Pew survey, only 17 percent favoured America. Clinton’s anti-propaganda strategy, as Clinton admitted, had not produced any tangible results on the ground.<sup>63</sup>

#### *6.1.4. The Diplomatic Surge*

The diplomatic surge had two aspects: negotiation with TB, and finding a regional solution. For the reconciliation aspect of the diplomatic surge, there existed several impediments.

Firstly, the unrealistic US conditions for peace talks – TB cut ties with AQ, stop violence against the Afghan state, and accept the Afghan Constitution, including the rights of women and minorities –<sup>64</sup> were unlikely (explained below) to be accepted by TB. Secondly, Pakistan’s presence and its veto power made the reconciliation process much more complicated, if not impossible. The ISI’s arrest of Mullah Baradar, who had been negotiating directly with Karzai, was a demonstration that Pakistan would shun any unauthorised

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the officials from the Bush Administration) did not work, Krasner, op. cit.; Nawaz, op. cit.; Clinton (2011), op. cit.; Holbrooke (2010), op. cit.

<sup>60</sup> Clinton, op. cit., pp. 181-182.

<sup>61</sup> Christophe, op. cit.; Neumann (2011), op. cit.

<sup>62</sup> Ahmed, op. cit.; Krasner, op. cit.; Christophe, op. cit.

<sup>63</sup> Clinton, op. cit., pp. 178, 187; Krasner, op. cit.; Singh, op. cit., p. 78; Ahmed, op. cit.

<sup>64</sup> Obama, Barack, (2011). Remarks by the President on the Way Forward in Afghanistan. [The White House]. <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/06/22/remarks-president-way-forward-afghanistan>>; Clinton (2011), op. cit.; Holbrooke (2010), op. cit.

negotiation. In fact, Pakistan's presence made negotiated peace impossible.<sup>65</sup> Thirdly, against the wishes of Petraeus and McChrystal, the security situation had not improved, and TB still enjoyed momentum in much of the country. Insecurity made reconciliation difficult for most of the moderate TB, who were likely to accept women's rights and abide by the Constitution, because they could not be offered safety of employment and security for their families by the government and the coalition forces.<sup>66</sup>

Fourthly, Afghans tended to switch to the party that they believed would be winning: those who have more guns, power and money often remain victors in Afghanistan. Obama's caveat was taken as a sign by foes and friends alike that the US would eventually leave and TB would be the ultimate victor. Until and unless TB did not feel they were on the verge of defeat, negotiating with TB was fruitless.<sup>67</sup> Fifthly, persuading the hardliners, such as Mullah Omer or Haqqani, to join the government seemed unfeasible. Omar was 'The Commander of the Faithful', a leader of all Muslims, a fanatic with 'significant delusions of grandeur',<sup>68</sup> and negotiations with such religious fanatics, normally, did not go well in the past. (Encouraging the defection, reintegration and reconciliation of lower-level Taliban seemed to be fruitless, because they would reconcile themselves three or four times just to claim more financial rewards.) They are not rational realists but religious extremists whose behaviours are conducted in accordance with their interpretation of Sharia Law. Omar gave up governance but not OBL in 2001 (and beyond). He never denounced AQ, even though Saudi Arabia, once TB's benefactor, repeatedly urged him to do so. Consequently, Saudi Arabia, which could have played a major role, was less willing to facilitate the talks.<sup>69</sup> Sixthly, there were several independent TB groups – the Haqqani network, the Hekmatyar group, and the Omer-led organisation – so a deal with one would not mean a deal with all. It was not even certain whether a deal with Omer would make his commanders in the south, who led local groups distant from the Quetta Shura, put down their guns. Moreover, none of the

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<sup>65</sup> DeYoung (2011), op. cit.; Krepon, op. cit.; Karzai's interview with *Times Magazine* (May 13, 2012), op. cit.; Karzai's interview with *CBC*, op. cit., September 4, 2012; Bergen (2011), op. cit.; Haass, op. cit.; Gates, op. cit., p. 477; Clinton, op. cit., p. 154; Transcript of interview by President Hamid Karzai with Pakistani *Geo TV*. [Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. October 21, 2011.

<[http://president.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/TranscriptofInterviewbyPresidentKarzaiwithGeoTV21October\\_English24102011181716563553325325.pdf](http://president.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/TranscriptofInterviewbyPresidentKarzaiwithGeoTV21October_English24102011181716563553325325.pdf)>

<sup>66</sup> Salbi, op. cit.; Baker, op. cit.

<sup>67</sup> Biddle (2011), op. cit.; Bernard Gwetzman's Interviews Max Boot, op. cit.; Kilcullen, op. cit.; Baker, op. cit.

<sup>68</sup> Bergen, op. cit.

<sup>69</sup> Bergen, op. cit.; Salbi, op. cit.



groups had any formal structure with offices and mailing addresses, making it difficult to know whether a party to negotiation represented a group of insurgents.<sup>70</sup>

Seventh, even though a deal with TB could not be trusted (as they broke it over and over again in Pakistan, e.g. in Swat in 2009), talks had been pursued in Mecca and the Maldives, but produced nothing, and one could not be very hopeful that it would do so in the future – especially when the history of negotiation, including the US one, required years, if not decades, but the Obama Administration wanted results in 18 months, treating the peace talks as a short cut to an exit.<sup>71</sup> Eighthly, a strong party to the negotiation was the NA that consisted of Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras. They had high-profile jobs in the Karzai Government and were against TB reconciliation, especially with hardliners like the Haqqani group, because they believed TB would again persecute them as minorities and lead the country towards another civil war.<sup>72</sup> Afghan women and their supporters equally feared TB reconciliation with the Afghan Government. The supporters were found everywhere: the Afghan Government, the Afghan Parliament, Afghan civil society, the Afghan media, US Government, US Congress, and the US media. Clinton, Nancy Pelosi, John Kerry, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and numerous activists such as Gayle Tzemach Lemmon made it clear that the rights of the Afghan women were never open to negotiation or haggling.<sup>73</sup> So Obama and the realists in his administration (as well as Karzai) were under tremendous pressure not to give away any human rights enjoyed by the Afghan women, whereas TB did not agree with many of them, believing them to be incompatible with the Sharia Law. Biddle claimed that unless the US was prepared to accept compromises,

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<sup>70</sup> Transcript of interview by President Hamid Karzai with Pakistani Geo TV. [Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. October 21, 2011.

<[http://president.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/TranscriptofInterviewbyPresidentKarzaiwithGeoTV21October\\_English24102011181716563553325325.pdf](http://president.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/TranscriptofInterviewbyPresidentKarzaiwithGeoTV21October_English24102011181716563553325325.pdf)>; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 236; Haass (2011), op. cit.; Bergen, op. cit.

<sup>71</sup> Neumann (2011), op. cit.; Bernard Gwetzman's interview with Max Boot, op. cit.; Bergen, op. cit.

<sup>72</sup> Bergen, op. cit.; Biddle (2011), op. cit.; Neumann (2011), op. cit.; Salbi, op. cit.; Biddle (2011), op. cit.; Salbi, op. cit.; Clinton, op. cit., p. 154.

<sup>73</sup> Lemmon, Gayle Tzemach, 'What Leaving Afghanistan Will Cost; Parsing the President's War Promises' *Foreign Affairs*, May 9, 2012, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137621/gayle-tzemach-lemmon/what-leaving-afghanistan-will-cost>>; Clinton (2011), op. cit.; 'Chairman Kerry Opening Statement As Delivered At Hearing On "Perspectives on Reconciliation Options in Afghanistan"', *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, July 27, 2010, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/KerryStatement100727a.pdf>>; Mann (2012), op. cit.; Clinton, op. cit., p. 151.

negotiating with TB was fruitless.<sup>74</sup> The Obama Administration, due to the pressure, could hardly accept compromises.

Finally, the lack of a unified US policy on negotiation with TB and bureaucratic fights between US officials were two other major obstacles to a peace settlement. A clear policy by all US bureaucracies, especially by the White House, was not issued or followed. The CIA and the military saw the TB as 'misogynous, intolerant, ruthless [and] barbaric', and were psychologically unwilling to negotiate with them. For the military leaders, especially Petraeus, it was too early to talk about reconciliation as they believed that the TB first needed to be militarily weakened before talks about reconciliation began.<sup>75</sup> Perhaps the lack of a clear policy made Karzai think that the US, like Pakistan, had the ability to bring the TB to the peace table but, like Pakistan, did not want to.<sup>76</sup> Despite all this, Holbrooke made it easy for the Afghan Government to talk to *any* TB by abolishing constraints imposed by the US Government. Furthermore, Holbrooke made consistent attempts to bring a closer relationship between Islamabad and Kabul so that talks with TB could be facilitated.<sup>77</sup> While he was fruitlessly encouraging warmer relationship between two neighbours, his personal relationship with Kabul and Islamabad, as well as US officials both in Kabul and the White House, kept deteriorating. As seen in the previous chapter, and as revealed by Chandrasekaran,<sup>78</sup> Eikenberry, Lute, and Jones weakened Holbrooke's standing in Kabul (e.g. restricted Holbrooke's deputies' ability in Kabul to travel and meet with Afghans) and in the White House (e.g. Lute and Jones would arrange key NSC meetings when Holbrooke was out of Washington), refusing to provide support for Holbrooke's diplomatic strategy. Lute and Jones supported negotiation with TB but they wanted Holbrooke replaced by Lakhdar Brahimi, who had the trust of Karzai as well as Iran and Pakistan in a way that Holbrooke did not. A furious Clinton had to interfere to tell Lute and Jones that the US did not outsource its FP. The bureaucratic war continued between the two parties, but the White House did not intervene, sometimes even promoted it. This was an example of what was going on in the White House during the surge while US forces were fighting in Afghanistan. The policymakers of the Obama Administration could hardly win the Afghanistan War, the big

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<sup>74</sup> Biddle (2011), op. cit.

<sup>75</sup> Chandrasekaran, op. cit., pp. 231-235; Clinton, op. cit., p. 157; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 228.

<sup>76</sup> Karzai's interview with *IRD* (April 5, 2014), op. cit.

<sup>77</sup> Holbrooke (2010), op. cit.; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 232.

<sup>78</sup> Chandrasekaran, op. cit., pp. 222, 227-232, 235.

war, when it was involved in small wars among themselves.<sup>79</sup> Holbrooke was the only actor in the administration who really strove for a peace deal with TB, but for all the factors covered above (and in the previous chapter), his hard work produced nothing other than 'a big zero'.<sup>80</sup>

As for a regional solution, the State Department, Holbrooke and his advisor Barnett Rubin in particular were to persuade the regional powers/neighbours (Pakistan, India, Iran, China, Russia and the Central Asian states) that stability in Afghanistan and the region was good for all. So attempts were made to get the neighbours to 'develop strategic partnerships to build up infrastructure, boost trade, increase investment, and fight terrorism'.<sup>81</sup> But neither did Afghanistan's neighbours support a US presence in Afghanistan, nor did their conflicting interests allow them to support a peaceful regional solution. Pakistan continued to see its interests in a military victory by the TB over the Afghan Government, not in a regional solution. India saw its interests in backing up the Karzai Government, and, to the abhorrence of Pakistani officials, continued to increase its influence with Afghan parties. Holbrooke could not persuade India effectively to reduce its heavy involvement, since his portfolio did not include the country.<sup>82</sup> Thus the Great Game held on to be alive and well in 2010 and 2011. As for Iran, US relations with the country in 2009 and 2010 became even worse over the latter's efforts to develop nuclear weapons and over its crackdown on domestic dissidents.<sup>83</sup> Iran continued to defy the US and the West while it kept interfering in neighbouring states, Afghanistan included. Its interference in Afghanistan was complicated: Iran saw its long-term strategic interest in the Karzai Government, so it provided support, including secret bags of US dollars delivered to Karzai's office (something that Karzai later unashamedly admitted); it equally provided secret support for TB to weaken the US and to eventually force it to leave Afghanistan. Iran worked against the interests not only of the US, but also of Saudi Arabia, and both countries carried on their interference; elements from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Gulf states

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<sup>79</sup> Crocker (2010), op. cit.

<sup>80</sup> Bergen, op. cit.

<sup>81</sup> Gavrilis, George, 'Why Regional Solutions Won't Help Afghanistan; The Myth of Neighborly Harmony', *Foreign Affairs*, October 18, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136598/george-gavrilis/why-regional-solutions-wont-help-afghanistan>>; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 226.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.; Neumann (2011), op. cit.; Mann (2012), op. cit.

<sup>83</sup> Obama, Barack, ON NW Flight 253 Terrorist Threat and Iran Violence, December 28, 2009, <<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobama/barackobamafight253terrorismiranviolence.htm>>; Obama, Barack, Speech on UN Security Council Sanctions Against Iran, June 9, 2010, <<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobama/barackobamairansanctions.htm>>

provided financial assistance to TB and other extreme elements, who disapproved of Shi'ism, while Iran supported certain sects of the Shia groups to counter the influence of the radical Sunni groups.<sup>84</sup>

Like Iran, both China and Russia feared a permanent US presence in Afghanistan, and they continued to disagree with the US continuous presence, and both refused to commit militarily. None showed interest in using their weight and influence in the region to put pressure on those who were fostering terror in Afghanistan against both the Afghans and the coalition forces. On the contrary, they undermined US efforts in Afghanistan: Russia continued to support its proxies in Afghanistan, as well as jostling for influence in the Central Asian states, and China reportedly supported TB through the ISI.<sup>85</sup> The Central Asian states, those neighbouring Afghanistan, likewise carried on supporting their respective proxy groups in Afghanistan, while, simultaneously, benefiting from the US presence and instability. Tajik officials, for example, regularly presented international donors with 'long lists of "win-win" cross-border development projects that, they insisted, must be built on their side of the border'.<sup>86</sup> In summary, even though the neighbours were eager to 'talk up solving common problems such as the drug trade, extremism, and poverty together, they have each found ways to live with and even profit from Afghanistan's debilitated state'.<sup>87</sup>

A pledge to talk to the neighbours required a huge commitment by the US, but the US saw the dialogue with other governments as 'politically uncongenial', 'insufficiently subservient to American interests', and, *most importantly*, practically impossible due to the clashes of interests of the different players within Afghanistan.<sup>88</sup> The opposing interests between Iran and Saudi Arabia, India and Pakistan, and the US and Russia/Iran/Pakistan/China dated back years, if not decades, and it was unrealistic to assume that they could be solved within 18 months. While the US failed to persuade neighbours to agree to a regional solution, it similarly could not persuade its NATO allies to

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<sup>84</sup> Rosenberg, Matthew, 'With Bags of Cash, C.I.A. Seeks Influence in Afghanistan', *The New York Times*, April 28, 2013; Jones (2009), op. cit., p. 276; Singh, op. cit., p. 12-13, 87; Gates, op. cit., p. 221; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 227; DeYoung, op. cit.; Neumann (2011), op. cit.; Transcript of interview by President Hamid Karzai with Pakistani Geo TV, [Office of the President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]. October 21, 2011.

<[http://president.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/TranscriptofInterviewbyPresidentKarzaiwithGeoTV21October\\_English24102011181716563553325325.pdf](http://president.gov.af/Content/Media/Documents/TranscriptofInterviewbyPresidentKarzaiwithGeoTV21October_English24102011181716563553325325.pdf)>

<sup>85</sup> Gavrilis, op. cit.; Gates, op. cit., p. 212; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 227; Woodward (2010), op. cit., p. 216.

<sup>86</sup> Gavrilis, op. cit.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Krepon, op. cit.; Haass (2011), op. cit.; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 227.

contribute the way they had been expected to do after Obama announced the surge. Lugar complained that the US had contributed \$26.2 billion in military and \$22.8 billion in non-military assistance from 2002 to 2011, while the rest of the allies only gave \$2.6 billion in military and \$4.2 billion in non-military for the same period. It was unacceptable for the US to continue to carry the lion's share of the economic and military burden in Afghanistan.<sup>89</sup>

#### *Conclusion*

The three-track strategy did not proceed as intended when it was implemented. The Afghan Government remained as corrupt as it had ever been. Its leader, the Afghan President, did not agree with numerous components of the strategy and did not (or could not) fully cooperate. At local levels, in areas cleared by the military, the civilian government either was absent or delivered late. Even then its personnel suffered from corruption, incompetence and criminality. The military managed to clear, though it took longer than had been assumed, the areas they had identified in 2009, but found it difficult to build (because of the lack of governance), and, most importantly, transfer to the ANSF. Like the civil government, the ANSF suffered from incompetence, corruption, and an addiction to drugs. Even though many places were clear of insurgents in the south, the insurgency spread to all corners of Afghanistan, and US forces and the ANSF remained as engaged in fighting as they had ever been. On the positive side, however, the military managed to increase the number of the ANSF and meet the goal it had set out during the Af-Pak review. Weak and incompetent as the ANSF were, they still had managed to take responsibility for the security of many population centres, such as Kabul, and numerous other large cities. Though slow and frustrating, this aspect of the military surge was working, and the ANSF remained the *only* hope (and tangible accomplishment of the surge) that they would eventually shoulder all security responsibility and allow US forces to responsibly withdraw from Afghanistan. As seen, the two components of the diplomatic surge equally did not produce positive results. Regional powers, Pakistan in particular, continued to back their proxies in Afghanistan, and the peace negotiations with the TB remained a distant dream. The main goal that the military in 2009 had requested the surge for was not achieved: McChrystal and Petraeus

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<sup>89</sup>Lugar, Dick, Opening Statement', 'Lugar Says Obama Lacks Vision of Success in Afghanistan Strategic Value of Long-Term Engagement and Cost No Longer Justified', *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 3, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/ranking/release/lugar-says-obama-lacks-vision-of-success-in-afghanistan-strategic-value-of-long-term-engagement-and-cost-no-longer-justified>>; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 241.

could not provide security for the Afghans. Those threats to security that McChrystal had set out to remove, such as corruption, criminality, warlordism, TB's violence and collateral damage, remained untouched in 2011. Security was to provide conditions for other objectives, and since it was not established, other goals therefore remained more or less unachieved. By June 2011, TB momentum might have been halted in the south, but TB had many other gains in other parts of Afghanistan. On the whole, TB momentum was not reversed. The Afghans felt as insecure and unsafe as they had done during 2009.

As demonstrated, almost every assumption made by the Biden camp in the Af-Pak review proved accurate; and almost every assumption the military, as Gates himself would agree,<sup>90</sup> had made proved illusory. Establishing whose assumptions proved accurate or erroneous is relevant to the decision to draw down. Their accuracy or otherwise directly impacted the public debate as well as policymakers' bureaucratic powers. As the President and all the policymakers made it clear, the drawdown was based on conditions on the ground, and thus far, the conditions in Afghanistan have been examined. The next section shines a light on the public debate over the Afghanistan War in 2011. To do so, the contribution of the actors/area experts from Congress, press, think-tanks and other influential organisations is examined. In doing so, the section would also bring to life the milieu Obama was operating in for the decision to draw down in 2011.

## **6.2. THE PUBLIC DEBATE**

Because of the public nature of the Af-Pak review in 2009 and the overwhelming interest in the Afghanistan War and its political implications for the 2012 presidential election, the decision of 2011 was awaited with bated breath by all those who had been involved in the decision to surge in 2009. Most of the actors – policymakers, members of Congress or pundits from the media/press, academia and think-tanks – again made attempts through speeches, publications and testimonies to influence the decision by trying to influence the public debate the way they believed it to be right for US national security interests. Before examining their output, however, it is important to shed light on some domestic factors, including US economic conditions.

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<sup>90</sup> Gates, op. cit., pp. 569-570

Like Petraeus, who could not illustrate much progress in Afghanistan by 2011, Obama had not managed to show improvement in the American economy, forcing 70 percent of Americans in numerous polls to disapprove of Obama's handling of the economy and to think that the country was on the wrong track.<sup>91</sup> The high disapproval rating was not surprising because, ever since Obama took office, the unemployment rate had risen from 7.6 to 9 percent, the national debt from \$10.6 to \$14.6 trillion, budget deficit to \$1580 billion for 2011-12, US citizens without health insurance to 49.9 million, Americans living below the official poverty line to 46.2 million, or one in six, and mortgages in negative equity to an all-time high.<sup>92</sup> By Dodge and Redman's estimates, the two wars had cost the US \$5 trillion by 2011,<sup>93</sup> and 60 percent of participants believed in a June 2011 Pew poll that the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars were the leading cause of US indebtedness.<sup>94</sup> Human costs equally concerned Americans. The American combat fatalities rose from 155 in 2008 to 317 in 2009, and 499 in 2010. 499 US soldiers represented an increase of 57 percent over 2009. Gates had to plead with Congress to be patient over the death tolls (and the economic costs). While the 9/11 attacks killed 2,976 Americans, US military had lost 6,234 troops in Iraq and Afghanistan by 2011.<sup>95</sup> Because of the repetitive combat deployments to war zones in Afghanistan and Iraq in the past decade, the ground forces were nearly 'broken'. The military families were under enormous stress and consequently 'junior and midlevel officers [were] leaving the force in large numbers'.<sup>96</sup> Due to the increasing financial and human costs, by summer 2011, opinion polls showed that the majority of Americans did not believe the Afghanistan War was worth fighting.<sup>97</sup> For example, only 21 percent in the Chicago Council on Global Affairs thought that the Afghanistan War was very important. 77 percent of Americans supported US withdrawal within two years.<sup>98</sup> According to Boot, the

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<sup>91</sup>Cooper, Helene, 'Cost of Wars a Rising Issue as Obama Weighs Troop Levels', *The New York Times*, June 21, 2011; Singh, op. cit., pp. 2, 12-13; Zeleny, Jeff, Jim Rutenberg. 'Obama Finds Praise, Even From Republicans', *The New York Times*, May 2, 2011.

<sup>92</sup> Cooper (2011), op. cit.; Mann (2012), op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>93</sup> Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>94</sup> Barno, David W., Nora Bensahel and Travis Sharp, 'How To Cut the Defense Budget Responsibly', *Foreign Affairs*, 2011, November 2, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136639/david-w-barno-nora-bensahel-and-travis-sharp/how-to-cut-the-defense-budget-responsibly>>

<sup>95</sup>Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 66; Singh, op. cit., p. 67; Mann (2012), op. cit., pp. 217, 223.

<sup>96</sup> Moten, Matthew, 'Out of Order: Strengthening the Political-Military Relationship', *Council on Foreign Relations*, September/October, 2010, <<http://www.cfr.org/polls-and-opinion-analysis/out-order/p22914>>; Desch, Michael C., 'Bush and the Generals', *Foreign Affairs*, May/June, 2007, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/62616/michael-c-desch/bush-and-the-generals>>

<sup>97</sup> Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 321; Singh, op. cit., pp. 12-13, 75-76; Dodge and Redman, op. cit., pp. 64-66.

<sup>98</sup> Mann (2012), op. cit., pp. 12-13, 75-76.

Afghanistan War had become increasingly sour because Americans believed the US was not winning. The American public was not against fighting a war, but against a war whose results was unclear. If the public saw results in Afghanistan, added Boot, there would have been a change in public opinion.<sup>99</sup>

Public opinion changed not only in America, but also in Afghanistan and in the countries of the allies. Although initially the Afghans welcomed US forces as liberators, the presence of so many international forces, the killing of innocent Afghans by US bombardments, the night raids/other human rights abuses by US forces, the length of war, the continuous *insecurity*, the presence of conspiracy theories, and the steady inflow of negative propaganda against the US and the allies by some neighbouring states (Pakistan in particular) had reduced the support for US troops in Afghanistan.<sup>100</sup> Even though the US spent hundreds of billions in the country, it was yet unable to win the hearts and minds of the Afghans, as Afghans' attitude ranged from wary to hostile.<sup>101</sup> In the UK, the war became increasingly unpopular and Prime Minister David Cameron had to announce that, following NATO's Lisbon Summit in November 2010,<sup>102</sup> he would withdraw British forces by 2015, regardless of what the situation was on the ground. Some coalition partners, such as The Netherlands and Canada, even announced an end to their presence in Afghanistan in 2010 and 2011, respectively.<sup>103</sup>

As seen above, the Afghanistan War did not turn around the way the military had assumed, so Congress had become more and more impatient. In June 2011, the House of Representatives came close to passing a resolution to ask the administration to produce a fixed timetable; the vote was 204 to 215, compared to 162 to 260 on a similar resolution the year before.<sup>104</sup> A month later it passed legislation to help raise the American debt ceiling, cutting the defence budget by \$350 billion over ten years.<sup>105</sup> The US Conference of Mayors in early June approved its second resolution after the Vietnam War, asking Congress to bring an early end to the Afghanistan War and redirect the money spent over constructions in

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<sup>99</sup> Bernard Gwetzman's interview with Max Boot, op. cit.

<sup>100</sup> O' Hanlon (2010), op. cit.; Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 321.

<sup>101</sup> Singh, op. cit., p. 75.

<sup>102</sup> Which had made the decision that US and NATO troops would begin to hand security responsibility to the ANSF in 2011 and end their combat mission by the end of 2014.

<sup>103</sup> O'Hanlon (2010), op. cit.

<sup>104</sup> Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 65.

<sup>105</sup> Mandelbaum, Michael, 'America's Coming Retrenchment; How Budget Cuts Will Limit the United States' Global Role,' *Foreign Affairs*, August 9, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68024/michael-mandelbaum/americas-coming-retrenchment>>; Barno, Bensahel and Sharp, op. cit.



Kandahar and Helmand towards constructions in America. It was predicted by the media that the argument whether the US should rebuild Kandahar or a US city would be likely to dominate the 2012 presidential election.<sup>106</sup> This was a clear political warning to all presidential candidates: whoever presented the Americans with policies to bring US engagement in Afghanistan to a quick though responsible end seemed, in 2011, to be winning more votes. Those Republicans who had a greater stake in the election, including Mitt Romney and Jon M. Huntsman Jr, in early 2011, wanted to hand over security to the Afghans and bring home swiftly the surge troops regardless of the conditions on the ground. Moreover, they supported 2014 as the end withdrawal date set out by the Lisbon Summit.<sup>107</sup>

Compared to 2009, in 2011, to the surprise of Gates, there were more Republicans who began to worry about the rise in the costs of the Afghanistan War in a financially difficult time, and consequently supported the Democrats' stance on the war.<sup>108</sup> Most of the opposition, however, came from the Democrats, and the rationales the Democrats (and the anti-war Republicans) invoked for opposing the continuation of the current strategy in Afghanistan could be summed up as follows: the high costs – an annual spending of around \$120 billion on 100,000 US soldiers or one out of every six to seven dollars the US spent on defence, \$12 billion on training the ANSF, and \$5 million on civilian assistance at the expense of cutting civilian aid projects to other countries – were unjustifiable and irrational; given US fiscal peril, the US could no longer cut services/programmes, raise taxes, lift the debt ceiling, and disregard high US unemployment to rebuild Afghanistan; not enough durable progress had been made so far as the Afghan Government remained corrupt and its ANSF had numerous shortcomings; the US objective to establish a centralised government and to remake the political, security and economic culture of Afghanistan was against the history of Afghanistan and beyond US means and ability; Pakistan continued to play both a 'firefighter and arsonist', and without its cooperation success was impossible; Afghanistan did not have the presence of AQ, and TB was not an enemy; US focus on South Asia prevented it from paying enough attention to other countries, from whom a threat could

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<sup>106</sup> Cooper (2011), op. cit.

<sup>107</sup> 'Transcript of Vice-Presidential Debate: Joe Biden and Paul Ryan Tackle', *The Council on Foreign Relations*, October 12, 2012; Cooper (2011), op. cit.; Dodge and Redman, op. cit., pp. 66-66; Landler, Mark, and Helen Cooper, NYT, June 22, 2011, op. cit.

<sup>108</sup> Gates, op. cit., p. 561; Cooper (2011), op. cit. However, hawkish Republicans, like John McCain, continued to ask for the preservation of the current US military spending, Cooper (2011), op. cit.

emanate, such as Yemen, Somalia and North Africa; the allies were not fully committed and provided nothing compared to the US; and US geostrategic interests were threatened not only by terrorism, but also by many other forces including debt, economic competition, energy, and food prices. They all wanted the Obama Administration to focus on specific goals in Afghanistan *essential* to US national security interests and avoid goals that could not be achieved in the first place, and, even if they were accomplished, remained *fragile* and *reversible*. In terms of what sort of an Afghanistan Obama needed to leave, which was the core focus of public debate in 2011, they made it clear that an Afghan state capable of tackling the threat of TB and the return of AQ was acceptable to them. It did not matter if the state was corrupt and undemocratic, as, due to Pakistan's support of insurgency, corrupt governance, insufficient ANSF, and Afghanistan's inherent complexities, it was 'unlikely' for the US to establish 'a self-sufficient, democratic nation that has no terrorists within its borders and whose government is secure from tribal competition', extremist threats and corruption. They wanted a small US presence in Afghanistan to operate CT operations to put pressure on AQ in Pakistan, while the ANSF fought TB.<sup>109</sup>

Unlike most members of Congress, the area experts, most of whom were the same faces as those from 2009, remained as divided in 2011 as they had been in 2009, and their viewpoints had remained more or less the same as 2009. By hearing the testimonies of more than 20 experts, the *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations* was as involved in the Afghanistan War as it had been in 2009. Influential FP organisations and journals, such as *Foreign Affairs*, had equally remained engaged in the Afghanistan War in 2011. The views of those who supported the military camp could be summed up as follows. They did not want Obama to prematurely withdraw but make withdrawal conditions based on the situation on

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<sup>109</sup> Kerry, John F., 'Chairman Kerry Opening Statement At Nomination Hearing For Ambassador To Afghanistan', *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, June 8, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/chair/release/chairman-kerry-opening-statement-at-nomination-hearing-for-ambassador-to-afghanistan>>; Kerry (May 1, 2011), op. cit.; Kerry (May 24, 2011), op. cit.; Kerry (May 1, 2011), op. cit.; Lugar, Dick, Opening Statement, 'Lugar Says Obama Lacks Vision of Success in Afghanistan Strategic Value of Long-Term Engagement and Cost No Longer Justified', *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 3, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/ranking/release/lugar-says-obama-lacks-vision-of-success-in-afghanistan-strategic-value-of-long-term-engagement-and-cost-no-longer-justified>>; Lugar, 'Opening Statement', Lugar Tells Afghan Nominee U.S. Must Focus Strategy, Defending Vital Security Interests at Less Cost', *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, June 8, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/ranking/release/lugar-tells-afghan-nominee-us-must-focus-strategy-defending-vital-security-interests-at-less-cost>>; Bernard Gwetzman's interview with Max Boot, op. cit.; Landler and Cooper (2011), op. cit.; Cooper (June 21, 2011), op. cit.; Dodge and Redman, op. cit., pp. 65-66.

the ground, and calculate it with not only US interests in mind, but also those of Afghanistan.<sup>110</sup> Conditions on the ground were to be decided on the perceptions of the military leaders, who, as will be seen below, believed that Obama should only withdraw a tiny number of the 30,000 troops because a rapid withdrawal would put in jeopardy the progress US civilian and military forces had made in the last 18 months. They wanted the continuation of the COIN-S for a few more years conducted by more or less the same US number (approximately 100,000) present in Afghanistan. Though slow compared to what Washington had expected, the current strategy was working. It was slow because the decision to increase troops and money was about two years old, but troops only completed their arrival eight months ago (around late summer 2010), and by the time they were deployed and got used to the environment, more time was taken, but they still managed to clear safe havens in the south. The experts urged Obama to give it time and patience and to provide a long-term programme, such as signing some kind of strategic partnership with Afghanistan to offer long-term support to the Afghan Government and its security forces beyond 2011 or 2014. They further urged Obama to aim for a fair and reasonably strong Afghan state (some even argued for a democratic Afghanistan)<sup>111</sup> capable of protecting its internal security. Such an Afghanistan had numerous advantages (already discussed under the advantages of a centralised state, above). If not, if the US withdrew prematurely and thus accepted defeat, it would have disastrous consequences (already explained in chapter five) for the US and allies. Obama would not be judged on how quickly he brought troops home, they warned Obama, but by how Afghanistan did once US troops left. They continued to believe in the arguments of ‘Afghanistan-having-compelling-relevance-to-US-national-security-interests’, ‘TB-AQ-being-connected’, ‘security-must-be-established-before-long-term-visions-materialised’, ‘US-must-show-resolve’, and ‘majority-of-Afghans-supported-US-presence’. Their rationales for the above arguments were essentially the same as those they had put down in 2009. They rejected CT-S for the reasons discussed under the argument of ‘multiple-anti-CT-plus-rationales’ in the previous chapter. These area experts, who continued to contribute to policymaking atmosphere, were Stephen Biddle, David Kilcullen,

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<sup>110</sup> Karzai believed that the US was not mindful of Afghan interests. Karzai wanted the relationship to be between two sovereign states, and Afghanistan interests should be clearly recognised, Karzai’s interview with *Voice of America* (July 14, 2014), op. cit.; Karzai’s interview with *Times-Now India* (May 27, 2014), op. cit.; Karzai’s speech to traditional *loya jirga* (November 17, 2011), op. cit.

<sup>111</sup> Salbi, op. cit.

Ryan C. Crocker, Max Boot, Frederick and Kimberly Kagan, Ronald E. Neumann, Zainab Salbi, Scott Seward Smith, Michael O'Hanlon, John Podesta, Stephen Hadley, Seth Jones, Peter Bergen, Fotini Christia, and James Dobbins.<sup>112</sup>

Those who had supported the Biden camp in 2009 disagreed again in 2011 with the supporters of the military camp. Unlike the above camp, they were pessimistic about the future of Afghanistan, believing the war was unwinnable the way the military leaders desired. Numerous factors could be found in their reasoning to justify their disagreement and pessimism: the regional countries', especially Pakistan's, continuous interference in Afghanistan; weak governance and incompetent ANSF; Afghanistan's dire financial conditions – Dodge and Redman concluded that without international support to Afghanistan, the state deficit would be half of its GDP in 2010, e.g. Afghanistan had exports of \$2.63 billion but imports of \$9.15 billion for the fiscal year 2009-10. It was the \$6.17 billion donor inflows that covered the account deficit of 54 percent of GDP.<sup>113</sup> Taxation could not help the deficit either, as only 8 percent of Afghanistan's budget was derived from it;<sup>114</sup> its ethnic, tribal and religious complexities – these complexities stood against a central government the US and coalitions had aimed for. Religious and ethnic conflicts (TB being largely Pashtun, but the Kabul Government largely consisted of minorities) continued to be a major source of conflict (or in their opinion, the 'civil war') and continued to pose a threat to the progress the US had made in the last decade. For all the above factors, Afghanistan would never have a fairly strong government capable of establishing security for all Afghans regardless of what strategy the Obama Administration applied. The future Afghanistan would continue to witness a weak, inept and corrupt government with insufficient ANSF, who would be in war with TB (and therefore indirectly with Pakistan), and even themselves.

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<sup>112</sup> Christia, Fotini, 'Letter From Kabul; Fear and Abandonment in Afghanistan', *Foreign affairs*, June 26, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/features/letters-from/letter-from-kabul>>; Neumann, op. cit.; Kilcullen (2010), op. cit.; Croker (2010), op. cit.; Salbi, op. cit.; Neumann, Hadley and Podesta, op. cit.; Bergen (2011), op. cit.; Jones (2010), op. cit.; O'Hanlon (2010), op. cit.; O'Hanlon, Michael, 'Staying Power: The U.S. Mission in Afghanistan Beyond 2011', *The Brookings Institution*, September/October, 2010, <<http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2010/08/25-afghanistan-ohanlon>>; Kagan, Frederick, Kimberly Kagan, op. cit.; Smith, Scott Seward, 'Making Withdrawal Work; A Smaller U.S. Footprint Will Make Afghanistan More Stable', *Foreign Affairs*, August 15, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68015/scott-seward-smith/making-withdrawal-work>>; DeYoung (2011), op. cit.; Bernard Gwetzman's interviews with Max Boot, op. cit.; Dobbins, James, 'Your COIN Is NO Good Here: How "Counterinsurgency" Became a Dirty Word', *Foreign Affairs*, October 26, 2010, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/66949/james-dobbins/your-coin-is-no-good-here>>;

<sup>113</sup> Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>114</sup> Bird and Marshall, op. cit., p. 251.

They proposed that success in Afghanistan meant having a ‘good enough’ Afghan Government capable of holding off TB and AQ with modest military and financial US support while some ‘messy stalemate’ continued to define Afghanistan’s future. A good enough Afghan state required a fast drawdown in July 2011, leaving between 10,000 and 25,000 troops to carry out CT operations and continue to train the ANSF. A CT-S would reduce worries on the Afghan side that the US was there to occupy the country, lessen some source of friction between Pakistan and the US, permit the US to go ‘long’ and sustainable not ‘big’ and unsustainable in light of the Afghanistan War being a ‘marathon not a sprint’,<sup>115</sup> make the US better prepared to react to contingencies/terrorist acts arising from the wider Middle East, Africa, the Korean Peninsula, and Iran, as well as allow the US to take into account its other domestic and international interests (e.g. those in the Asia Pacific), since in 2011 Afghanistan absorbed more US economic, political, diplomatic, military, and human resources of every sort than it warranted. The Afghanistan War not just involved mission creep but also ‘mission multiplication’, as US objectives had ballooned out of proportion, turning the goal of containing terrorism into nation-building and the modernisation of Afghanistan.<sup>116</sup> Such expensive focus on Afghanistan posed a threat to US economic powers, and it was time Obama did something about it. They also continued to believe in the arguments of ‘Afghanistan-having-minimal-relevance-to-US-national-security-interests’, ‘TB-and-AQ-being-disconnected-and-AQ-would-not-return-if-TB-took-over-large-parts-of-Afghanistan’, ‘US-received-AQ-threats-from-other-states-not-just-Afghanistan’, ‘Pakistan-being-more-important-to-US-interests-than-Afghanistan’, and ‘greater-US-presence-would-not-guarantee-a-negotiated-settlement-because-Pakistan-would-increase-its-support-for-TB’. Richard Haass, Michael Krepon, Paul R. Pillar, Michael Mandelbaum, Zbigniew Brzezinski, General David Barno, journalist Linda Robinson, Paul Yingling, Toby Dodge, Nicholas Redman, Bird and Marshall, and numerous other think-tanks were among those who put forward the above viewpoints.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 330.

<sup>116</sup> Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 165; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., pp. 221, 245; Singh, op. cit., p. 86.

<sup>117</sup> Haass (2011), op. cit.; Haass, Richard N, ‘The Irony of American Strategy: Putting the Middle East in Proper Perspective’, *Council on Foreign Relations*, May/June, 2013, <[http://www.cfr.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/irony-americanstrategy/p30534?cid=rss-fullfeed-the\\_irony\\_of\\_american\\_strategy-042313](http://www.cfr.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/irony-americanstrategy/p30534?cid=rss-fullfeed-the_irony_of_american_strategy-042313)>; Krepon, op. cit.; Pillar, Paul R., ‘Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and Other Extremist Groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan’, Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 24, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/al-qaeda-the-taliban-and-other-extremist-groups-in-afghanistan-and-pakistan>>; Barno and Robinson, op. cit.; Mandelbaum, op. cit.; Brzezinski, op. cit.;

The two camps, however, agreed on two policy suggestions. While a small number (named in the literature review chapter) wanted the US to get tough with Pakistan, most disagreed, asking for continued engagement with Pakistan at all levels, including the continuation of US military and civilian assistance. This was the best option to reduce threats emanating from Pakistan, or else Pakistan could make it worse for US efforts in Afghanistan (explained in chapters four and five).<sup>118</sup> Second, almost all of the above pundits, no matter what views they held, stressed the importance of a peaceful solution to the Afghanistan conflict, be it a regional one or reconciliation with TB. Continued engagement with neighbouring countries, especially Pakistan, they argued, could provide a better chance for peace talks, or at the very least, prevent Afghanistan from being destabilised.

The next section examines 'what' the end strategy became, as well as offering some concluding remarks on the impact of the false assumptions, bureaucratic politics, belief systems and images, as well as domestic influences upon the resulting policy.

### 6.3. THE DECISION TO WITHDRAW AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Unlike 2009, the 2011 decision was not about a top-down reassessment of the strategy, but about the pace of US troop withdrawal. As seen above, Obama was faced with two options: a slow withdrawal or a steep troop cut. There was another difference to the decision: Obama managed to employ a 'consensus' model. This model allows a trusted advisor, or what James Pfiffner would call the 'honest broker',<sup>119</sup> to work to bring every bureaucracy to a strategy that the President supported, e.g. the review by Hadley to surge

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Yingling, op. cit.; Bird and Marshall, op. cit., pp. 221, 245; think tanks and numerous other experts are mentioned in Singh, op. cit., p. 86; and, Gates, op. cit., p. 492.

<sup>118</sup> Yusuf, Moeed, 'Assessing U.S. Policy and Its Limits in Pakistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 5, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/assessing-us-policy-and-its-limits-in-pakistan>>; Shuja, op. cit.; Ahmed, op. cit.; Fair, C. Christine, 'Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and Other Extremist Groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, May 24, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/al-qaeda-the-taliban-and-other-extremist-groups-in-afghanistan-and-pakistan>>; Blank, Jonah, 'Invading Afghanistan, Then and Now', *Foreign Affairs*, September/October, 2011, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68214/jonah-blank/invading-afghanistan-then-and-now>>; Kerry, John F., 'Chairman Kerry Opening Statement At Hearing With Secretary Clinton On Afghanistan And Pakistan', *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, June 23, 2011, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/chair/release/chairman-kerry-opening-statement-at-hearing-with-secretary-clinton-on-afghanistan-and-pakistan>>; Brzezinski, op. cit.

<sup>119</sup> Pfiffner, James, 'Decision Making in the Obama White House', *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (June), 2011, pp. 244-262, p. 244, <<http://www.marioguerrero.info/326/Pffiner2011.pdf>>

in Iraq.<sup>120</sup> In 2011, Obama himself was the honest broker. Consequently, this time the process was disciplined and unified. Obama met Robert Gates, Hillary Clinton, Thomas Donilon and Petraeus individually (and later as a group in the three NSC meetings in June) and heard their opinions.<sup>121</sup>

The departing Secretary of Defense Gates and the military wanted a conditions-based and gradual withdrawal where the ANSF could take over, as pulling out too fast would threaten the gains the American-led coalition had made in the previous 18 months. Gates warned 'against undercutting a decade-long investment by cutting the budget too rapidly'. He wanted the Obama Administration to continue to support the Afghan Government and improve its security forces, and avoid repeating the mistakes made by the US after the Soviets left Afghanistan when it descended into chaos and into TB hands.<sup>122</sup>

Clinton and Mullen were of the same opinion.<sup>123</sup> Clinton expressed reservation about the scale of the reduction Obama had in mind, because it would signal to the Afghans that the US was abandoning Afghanistan.<sup>124</sup> Petraeus in turn believed that the administration should be careful with the withdrawal as the TB was moving to reconstitute after the beating of the past year, trying to regain the momentum they had lost. For him, any withdrawal should take account of conditions on the ground, meaning how strengthened the TB were, how ready the ANSF were to take over, and how the economical and political progress of Afghanistan was doing. 'Most of those [conditions] would weigh in favor of staying longer', one senior official said.<sup>125</sup> Petraeus pointed to the southern districts of Nawa, Garmsir, Arghandab, and Zhari Amrit to argue that the surge had worked, and they needed a few more years to build on the progress they believed they had made in the past 18 months. For the military leaders, the surge was working.<sup>126</sup> The civilian advisors of the President did not agree. Invoking the false assumptions, they argued that they would not be able to transfer security responsibility to the Afghans in most places cleared by the military. The Biden group, including the inner circle, questioned how much longer the US needed to

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<sup>120</sup> McGurk, Brett, 'Agreeing on Afghanistan: Why the Obama Administration Chose Consensus This Time', *CNN*, June 22, 2011, < <http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/06/22/agreeing-on-afghanistan/>>

<sup>121</sup> Gates, op. cit., pp. 562-565.

<sup>122</sup> Gates, op. cit., pp. 486, 492, 562-565; O'Hanlon, (2010), op. cit.; Landler and Cooper ( June 22, 2011), op. cit.; Sanger, David E., Eric Schmitt and Thom Shanker, 'Steeper Pullout Is Raised as Option for Afghanistan', *The New York Times*, June 5, 2011.

<sup>123</sup> O'Hanlon (2010), op. cit.

<sup>124</sup> Landler and Cooper (June 22, 2011), op. cit.; Clinton, op. cit.; Gates, op. cit., p. 564.

<sup>125</sup> Sanger, Schmitt and Shanker, op. cit.

<sup>126</sup> Gates, op. cit., pp. 483, 486-487.

stay on to keep security. They argued that the Afghan Government lacked the capacity and political will to provide security and civil administration, and hence the COIN-S would not produce results even if they continued with it.<sup>127</sup> Around the time the administration considered the decision to withdraw, a report by the CIA on Afghanistan was leaked, which had concluded that the Afghanistan War was heading to a stalemate. For the White House, this was another card 'on surge'.<sup>128</sup> According to Gates, the Biden camp, from the moment Obama left West Point on December 1, 2009, began to search for *any* possible piece of information that could assist it with proving that the Biden camp was right and that the military was wrong on the surge, that the military was not following the President's instructions, and that the war was going from bad to worse.<sup>129</sup> The damaging rift and the suspicion still carried on in 2011.<sup>130</sup> However, nobody in the White House, not even those who had opposed the surge, advised Obama to pull out all US troops at once.<sup>131</sup> As will be seen below, they still proposed a CT-S that supported a small presence in Afghanistan. The Biden group believed that with fewer troops Karzai would be compelled to make peace with TB, and the Afghan Army, incompetent as they were, would be able to defend the key cities. But the military believed such an approach was too risky and could result in a messy outcome. The districts liberated by the surge would slip back into the hands of TB. Talking to TB would only produce results when the US was in a position of strength, not when the US was heading home.<sup>132</sup> In short, the policy suggestions given to the President by the policymakers from the two opposing camps were similar to the viewpoints the area experts, indirectly, suggested to the President above: the Biden group again argued for a CT-S, but the military stressed the continuation of the COIN-S.<sup>133</sup>

As far as specific questions were concerned, the number and time of the withdrawal of the 30,000 (+3000) troops, Petraeus, who had met in Afghanistan with his generals, had several options. The most conservative option required troops to remain for another two years after July 2011. This plan, said Petraeus, could enable the Afghan Government to

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<sup>127</sup> Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 321.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p. 327.

<sup>129</sup> Gates, op. cit., pp. 474, 483, 486-487. Moreover, the assessment of December 16, 2010, was prepared by Lute, and Gates believed it was not 'balanced', as it focused majorly on the negative aspects of the strategy, Gates, op. cit., p. 500.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., pp. 474, 502.

<sup>131</sup> Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 324.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 322.

<sup>133</sup> Sanger, Schmitt and Shanker, op. cit.; Gates, op. cit., pp. 556-557.



extend its authority in all corners of Afghanistan. The most radical option called for the surge forces to leave by July 2012. This option would put at risk the fragile accomplishments the military had made so far in the south. He asked for the middle ground option, which required keeping the majority of the surge troops until November 2012, that is, after the fighting season ended in October, while between 5,000 and 10,000 could be withdrawn by the winter of 2012. This approach, said Petraeus, would give him a good chance to achieve his campaign's plan, including redeploying some of the surge troops in 2012 to the east to pacify some districts from the Haqqani network.<sup>134</sup> It seemed that Petraeus had not heard Obama well during the Af-Pak review. Obama had made it clear to the general that in July 2011, there would be no question of keeping the troops for longer, because Obama would begin to withdraw them. The general had been authorised to clear those places that he could transfer within the 18-month period. Obama only approved the surge in order to withdraw US forces. Now Petraeus was asking for almost two more years, if counted from December 2009, for another four years. Even then, 68,000 US troops would still remain, while the 30,000 would *begin* to withdraw. Obama disagreed. His option was to remove 15,000 by the end of 2011 and 18,000 by July 2012. Petraeus stated that Obama's option would 'invalidate' his campaign plan. 'David, you shouldn't have assumed I wouldn't do what I told the American people I would', said Obama.<sup>135</sup> Obama this time clearly did not want to follow the military advice the way he had done two years ago: he looked for a much quicker timetable than the military suggested. Obama wanted to set in place a policy trajectory that could succeed (Obama's definition of success, below), but was also sustainable *and* proportional to US interests.<sup>136</sup>

Mullen spoke that a midsummer withdrawal would require the troops to start packing up late spring, which was before the peak of the fighting season. Clinton and Gates agreed with Mullen.<sup>137</sup> Ironically, so did Donilon, McDonough and Panetta on this particular point.<sup>138</sup> Biden, Blinken, Lute, Rhodes, and Brennan, on the other hand, supported the July deadline.<sup>139</sup> Gates then proposed a middle ground, as he had done for the surge in 2009,

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<sup>134</sup> Chandrasekaran, op. cit., pp. 322-323; Landler and Cooper (June 22, 2011), op. cit.; Gates, op. cit., pp. 562-565.

<sup>135</sup> Chandrasekaran, op. cit., pp. 323, 325.

<sup>136</sup> McGurk, op. cit.; Kerry (June 8, 2011), op. cit.; Mann (2012), op. cit., p. 319; Singh, op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>137</sup> Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 326; Gates, op. cit., pp. 562-565.

<sup>138</sup> Gates, op. cit., p. 565.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

which required the troops to return in September. Obama consented, and on the evening of June 22 the President announced from the East Room of the White House that he was going to fulfil the commitment he had announced at the end of 2009: the withdrawal of the surge troops, that is, 10,000 by the end of 2011, 23,000 by summer 2012, and by 2014, following the agreement of the Lisbon Summit, the entire security responsibility, or the combat role, would be transferred to the Afghans, and a small number of US troops might remain to conduct CT operations and train and assist the ANSF.<sup>140</sup>

Thus Obama managed to accomplish the policy trajectory he set in motion in 2009: Afghanise the mission and gradually bring US involvement to an end!

Obama obviously acted against the advice of the military leaders as well as his top civilian advisors, Clinton and Gates, since the troop reduction was deeper and faster than the military recommended. The decision also did not represent the situation on the ground. The question is why he did so now but not in 2009? The answer lies in the impact of bureaucratic politics, domestic influences and the belief system and images of Obama.

The decision to send American forces to kill OBL in Pakistan was Obama's personal decision. The President took the decision even when it involved tremendous risk. But it paid off. He was hailed by friends and foes alike, including by Dick Cheney. Now the positive tone stood in contrast to the assumption that Obama was a middle way seeker, an indecisive and back seat leader, incapable of handling rapidly evolving events around the world.<sup>141</sup> The decision 'represented a significant mark in his evolution as a national political leader'.<sup>142</sup> On the other hand, Petraeus's standing had been weakened by his flawed assumptions. His eminence within the Situation Room was further damaged by his appointment to the top job at the CIA. Even though Petraeus was entitled to be the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Obama did not consider him for the position.<sup>143</sup> According to Singh, his appointment was politically motivated to 'limit the potential that such a prestigious figure could cause Obama'.<sup>144</sup> Whatever the cause for the change of position might have been, the appointment removed him from the rank of the military and the Pentagon hierarchy. His

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<sup>140</sup> Obama, Barack, (2011). Remarks by the President on the Way Forward in Afghanistan. [The White House]. <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/06/22/remarks-president-way-forward-afghanistan>>; Gates, op. cit., p. 564.

<sup>141</sup> Mann (2012), op. cit., pp. 13-14; Singh, op. cit., pp. 8, 17.

<sup>142</sup> Zeleny, Jeff, Jim Rutenberg. 'Obama Finds Praise, Even From Republicans', *The New York Times*, May 2, 2011; McGurk, op. cit.

<sup>143</sup> Mann (2012), op. cit., p. 319.

<sup>144</sup> Singh, op. cit., p. 83.

bureaucratic position was even more damaged by the presence of a no longer inexperienced leader in the White House. Unlike 2009, in June of 2011, almost three years into the presidency, Obama was more experienced and had developed greater understanding of the Afghanistan War.<sup>145</sup> Penultimately, those colleagues who supported Petraeus during the Af-Pak review in 2009 were either gone or on their way out. He had lost McChrystal a year early and Gates was on his way out. Hawkish Senators like John McCain and Lindsey Graham could hardly influence the media and public opinion due to poor results in the theatre of war in Afghanistan. Finally, Donilon as the NSA and Panetta as Gates's successor had a naturally greater say this time. Having achieved some accomplishments in the past 18 months through CT operations, including the killing of OBL, both favoured CT operations, such as the intensification of unmanned drone strikes.<sup>146</sup> The Biden camp was strengthened not only by those appointments, but also by the accuracy of their assumptions. Petraeus, therefore, did not enjoy the bureaucratic position he had had 18 months ago.

The numerous documents found from OBL's compound convinced Obama (and the Biden camp, including John Kerry) that AQ was significantly disrupted and its presence was dramatically reduced in Afghanistan, and, with OBL's death, AQ was so weakened and 'within reach' of being defeated that there was no need to keep a great number of troops in Afghanistan. While the killing of OBL was one 'strategic consideration' that Obama invoked to take an aggressive position (much aggressive that the recommendations made by the military commanders), the rising costs of the war were another.<sup>147</sup> As seen in the previous section, public debate was against an expensive involvement in Afghanistan. His political advisors, the Democratic Party, and the general American public pressurised him to reduce the expensive involvement in a war that seemed unwinnable, and instead take measures to focus on domestic problems such as reducing the unemployment rate and speeding up the slow recovery of the economy.<sup>148</sup> The Democrats had a reason to be fuming since, in the mid-term 2010 election, the Democrats had suffered massive defeats, and Republicans had recaptured the majority in the House of Representatives. The Republican-controlled House

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<sup>145</sup> McGurk, op. cit.

<sup>146</sup> Sanger, Schmitt and Shanker, op. cit.

<sup>147</sup> Obama ( June 22, 2011), op. cit.; Sanger, Schmitt and Shanker, op. cit.; Kerry ( June 23, 2011), op. cit.; Dodge and Rednam, op. cit., p. 51; Mann (2012), op. cit., pp. 214, 316-317.

<sup>148</sup> Sanger, Schmitt and Shanker, op. cit.; Landler and Cooper, op. cit.

pressurised Obama to raise the debt ceiling and reduce the budget deficit. More Republicans in 2011, compared to 2009, especially those involved in the presidential campaign, demanded an end to an expensive Afghanistan engagement. As seen in section two, Obama's approval rating had plummeted considerably, and he faced an increasingly restive American public over the Afghanistan War.<sup>149</sup> FP analyst Strobe Talbott was even of the opinion that Obama could lose the presidency over the war.<sup>150</sup> Indeed, Obama faced a re-election the next year, and needed the support of his party and his political advisors, not Petraeus or any other military leaders.<sup>151</sup> Obama clearly seemed to have listened to the public debate when he announced that he was going to bring an end to US involvement in Afghanistan and instead invest in America and its people.<sup>152</sup>

Another important factor in 2011 was the changing of the whereabouts of the threat. More and more reports warned that AQ recruited Americans to carry out their attacks. A prime example was Army psychiatrist Nidal Malik Hasan, who killed thirteen people and wounded thirty-two others. Moreover, AQ threats from other countries – such as Somalia and Yemen – had materialised by 2011 by a Nigerian young man ('the bomber from Yemen'), who (trained in one of the camps in Yemen) tried to blow up a passenger plane headed for Detroit on Christmas Day.<sup>153</sup> Thus the threat no longer was limited to Afghanistan and Pakistan, since AQ had proved to be capable of carrying out attacks through its affiliates from other countries and from within America.<sup>154</sup> So the US was to focus more on other neglected regions and on security at home, according to Brennan's new counterterrorism strategy in 2011.<sup>155</sup> In 2011, the Obama Administration also faced numerous other pressing security issues including Iran, North Korea, and, most importantly, the Arab Spring. Unbelievably for many in the Obama Administration, the US spent more

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<sup>149</sup>Landler and Cooper, op. cit.; Mann (2012), op. cit., p. 318.

<sup>150</sup> Mann (2012), op. cit., p. 323.

<sup>151</sup> Yingling, op. cit.; Sanger, Schmitt and Shanker, op. cit.; Landler and Cooper, op. cit.

<sup>152</sup> Obama (June 22, 2011), op. cit.

<sup>153</sup> 'Al Qaeda in Yemen and Somalia: A Ticking Time Bomb', A Report to the *Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate*, One Hundred Eleventh Congress, Second Session, January 21, 2010, <<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/index.html>>

<sup>154</sup> Farrall, Leah. 'How al Qaeda Works: What the Organization's Subsidiaries Say About Its Strength', *World Affairs*, April 30, 2011, <[http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/worldnews/topics/alqaeda?page=7&solrsort=ds\\_created%20asc](http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/worldnews/topics/alqaeda?page=7&solrsort=ds_created%20asc)>

<sup>155</sup> Mann (2012), op. cit., p. 313.

money each year to keep Marine battalions in Nawa and Garmsir than it provided the entire nation of Egypt in military and development assistance.<sup>156</sup>

Finally, and most importantly, the surge was in sync with Obama's belief system and images of the Afghanistan War. Obama faced, to a lesser extent, though, the same opposing elements in 2009 – restive Americans, relentless budget pressure, opposition from Congress – as he did in 2011, yet he did not refuse the military in 2009. As analysed in section one, things had not improved greatly in Afghanistan. It was untrue when Obama stated in his speech that 'we are meeting our goals' and starting the drawdown from 'a position of strength'.<sup>157</sup> Obama, as well as his supporters, such as Kerry, knew through CIA reports and the December 2010 assessment that most US goals in Afghanistan had *not* been met, and the strategy was not working.<sup>158</sup> So the achievement of US goals, which Obama gave as a reason for the drastic drawdown, could not have been the answer. The answer could lie in Obama's belief system and images of the US role in the world in general and in the Afghanistan War in particular: Obama did not see military means as the only solution to violent extremism, but 'diplomacy', 'strong partnerships' with allies and Muslim countries (multilateralism/engagement rather than unilateralism), investment in 'homeland security', and strengthening American values (by 'living them at home').<sup>159</sup> Obama preferred not to get deeply involved in conflicts that engaged ground forces, be they a CT-S or a COIN-S. Instead he preferred a 'leading from behind' approach, e.g. in Libya, Iraq (against Islamic state militants), and, to a lesser extent, Syria.<sup>160</sup> As for the Afghanistan War, it was a civil war, an unwinnable one, and McChrystal's COIN-S was way too expensive and beyond US means and interests, and failed, as Obama had assumed, due to the 'Pakistan problems', incompetent and corrupt government/ANSF, and the inherent complexities of Afghanistan. Obama's views were compatible with those of Biden and his group/supporters, but he disagreed only with the Vice-President's drastic approach (a quick withdrawal and leave

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<sup>156</sup> Chandrasekaran, op. cit., p. 324.

<sup>157</sup> Obama (June 22, 2011), op. cit.

<sup>158</sup> Obama (December 16, 2010), op. cit.; Gates, op. cit., p. 488; Kerry (June 23, 2011), op. cit.

<sup>159</sup> Obama, Barack, "New Beginning" Speech at Cairo University, June 4, 2009, <<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobama/barackobamacairouniversity.htm>>; Obama, Barack, Speech to the Nation on Ending Operation Iraqi Freedom, August 31, 2010, <<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/wariniraq/barackobamairaqendofcombatops.htm>>

<sup>160</sup> Obama (June 22, 2011), op. cit.; Haass (2011), op. cit.; Haass (2013), op. cit.; Singh, op. cit., p. 7; Dodge and Redman, op. cit., p. 50; Obama, Barack, Speech on the Death of Muammar Qaddafi, October 20, 2011, <<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobama/barackobamaqaddafideath.htm>>

only a number sufficient to conduct a CT-S) in both 2009 and 2011.<sup>161</sup> For the decision to withdraw (and the decision to surge), Obama's outlook for Afghanistan was more in line with his future Secretary of State John Kerry. Kerry wanted to have a 'good enough' state in Afghanistan ('not building a perfect state') to stop insurgents securing a base from which to launch attacks on the US and the allies, and to keep the gains the US had made. This way, their strategy and resources would match their objectives.<sup>162</sup> Like Kerry, Obama was increasingly doubtful about success the way the military defined it in Afghanistan.<sup>163</sup> But unlike Biden's statements, Kerry's statements argued against haste and recommended a responsible withdrawal.<sup>164</sup>

So Obama's direction moved towards achieving such an Afghanistan that Kerry (and those area experts who sided with the Biden camp in section two – but not at the speed Biden would have wished for) argued for.<sup>165</sup> Changing the goal from a stable and secure to a not perfect state helped Obama to withdraw most of US troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2014. Obama hoped that such a state could be defended by the ANSF, regardless of how inadequate they were. Thus he treated the July 2011 date, as he had aimed at in 2009, as the beginning of the end of the US's longest war against TB (not AQ, as it would continue) in Afghanistan. The ANSF, as argued in the Af-Pak review in 2009, were becoming a ticket out of Afghanistan for US troops. The answer for the drastic troop reduction also lay in Obama's aim for the surge: the surge was authorised to enable US troops to come home. It was an escalate-then-exit strategy. The exit part of the strategy, as Obama had made clear in 2009, was to begin in July 2011,<sup>166</sup> and that was why he authorised the surge. The factors considered above certainly helped Obama to be more aggressive in bringing US forces home. It would probably have been another decision entirely if Petraeus had produced the same results as he had done in Iraq in 2007, something that Petraeus was confident in 2009 that he would. It might have silenced Congress, the American public, the critics, and consequently Obama. It could have challenged Obama's belief system and the assumptions it carried. But, as seen in section one, that was not the case. Petraeus's magic wand, which

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<sup>161</sup> Biden and Ryan, *op. cit.*; Obama, June 22, 2011, *op. cit.*

<sup>162</sup> Kerry (December 16, 2010), *op. cit.*

<sup>163</sup> O'Hanlon (2010), *op. cit.*

<sup>164</sup> Kerry (May 1, 2011), *op. cit.*

<sup>165</sup> Obama (June 22, 2011), *op. cit.*; Obama, Barack, Speech to the Nation on Ending Operation Iraqi Freedom, August 31, 2010,

<<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/wariniraq/barackobamairaqendofcombatops.htm>>

<sup>166</sup> Gates, *op. cit.*, p. 556.

had previously turned a losing war into a relative success, did not work in Afghanistan. Most of his assumptions, as seen above, had proved to be mistaken. Biden and his group, on the other hand, were right on almost every one of their assumptions, confirming Obama's beliefs that the Afghanistan War was not winnable and the military's 'loftiest ambitions' were unachievable.<sup>167</sup> The Biden camp's prediction (to which Obama had agreed in 2009) proved almost exact: in July 2011, things would remain the same in Afghanistan and not much would be changed for the better.

Meanwhile, Obama did not seem to think in technical terms of COIN-S or CT-S. For Obama, the US mission in Afghanistan in 2010 and 2011 was never a COIN-S, nor did the drawdown decision change it *immediately* to a CT-S. Obama did not buy both in the Af-Pak review in 2009, and rejected them once again in 2011. However, McChrystal had tried to apply a COIN-S in the south of Afghanistan, but the rest of Afghanistan still experienced CT operations, and most NATO states continued to apply caveats in their operations. So, technically speaking, it was perhaps a combination of both strategies. But the drawdown decision neither ended the COIN-S nor approved a CT-S. However, the decision *began* to bring an end to the COIN-S that the military had adopted 18 months ago (even if it was in two provinces), and *paved* the way for a CT-S, but it did not change it overnight. Obama's strategy, if anything, was a *pragmatic approach* that set in motion a reasonably responsible US withdrawal.<sup>168</sup>

To sum up, the stalemate of the US war in Afghanistan, the inaccuracy of the military assumptions, and the accuracy of the assumptions made by the Biden camp, and the weakening positions of the COIN-S pundits and the emerging of Obama as a strong leader were factors that influenced the decision to withdraw. Furthermore, the increasing opposition from Congress and the American public, the dire economic conditions in America, the emphatic language used by Obama in 2009 that he would not listen to pleas in 2011 to increase troops or keep the same level, the increasing threats from other countries, as well as from within America, the purpose of the surge to bring US forces home, and most

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<sup>167</sup> Sanger, Schmitt and Shanker, op. cit.; Obama, Barack, Speech to the Nation on Ending Operation Iraqi Freedom, August 31, 2010, <<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/wariniraq/barackobamairaqendofcombatops.htm>>; Obama, Barack, Speech on the Death of Muammar Qaddafi, October 20, 2011, <<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobama/barackobamaqaddafideath.htm>>

<sup>168</sup> Obama (June 22, 2011), op. cit.

importantly, the belief system and images of the President were other factors which were reflected in the decision to withdraw.



## CONCLUSION

This thesis has provided an analysis of United States foreign policy towards Afghanistan from entrance to exit by pinpointing four decisions, each demonstrating a developmental turning point in US Afghan policy. Employing the Foreign Policy Decision-Making (FPDM) Approach from Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), the policymaking process of each decision was subjected to scrutiny. In FPDM, the *process* of the foreign policy decision-making is seen as essential, and this has been the case in this thesis. The FPDM Approach stresses the importance of understanding the individual *policymakers*, their *particularities* and the *context* in which they operate in order to understand foreign policy choices. This thesis in its *integrative* approach likewise has focused on, in addition to the role of 'false assumptions', the impact of the policymakers, their individual characteristics, namely, belief system and images, domestic influences, and bureaucratic politics upon the decision-making process and the resulting four policies. They were considered as independent variables as required by the FPDM Approach.

The role of bureaucratic politics was prominent within both administrations. The Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, supported by the unprecedentedly powerful Vice-President Dick Cheney, largely managed to shape the GWOT policy and its derivative, the counterterrorism policy, in the way that suited the Defense Department. Giving terrorism a broad definition, keeping the anti-terrorism campaign wide to include Iraq and other rogue states, and insisting on employing a counterterrorism or light footprint strategy were three military components of the strategy that put the Pentagon at the centre of policymaking. Secretary of State Colin Powell's voice was drawn out when he argued for a narrow approach to terrorism and for using US forces as peacekeepers. He was often ignored because he had neither the trust of President George W. Bush nor the backing of Cheney. However, in the second term of the Bush Administration, both Cheney and Rumsfeld had lost their bureaucratic muscle, owing to their mistaken belief systems and the assumptions they carried, and their policy ideas were ignored during decision-making: for example, the decision to surge in Iraq. When Rumsfeld disagreed with the Iraq surge and continued to insist on a counterterrorism strategy, Bush fired him and instead employed Robert Gates. Gates, Stephen Hadley, David Petraeus and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice were now influential in decision-making, pushing US Afghan (and Iraq) policy towards a counter-

insurgency strategy. Rice as a National Security Advisor in the first term was a novice and consequently could not wrestle bureaucratically with the two heavyweights, namely, Cheney and Rumsfeld. But as a Secretary of State Rice had built up confidence and experience and thus managed to stand up to both giants. In the Obama Administration, the role of bureaucratic politics was even more visible. Petraeus and McChrystal were merely two commanders, but the White House was so afraid of their resignations that it eventually had to give in to their requests, though with some limitations. Petraeus was feared because he was a prestigious commander who had prevented US defeat in Iraq. With all the ideological and personal proximity the inner circle and the Biden camp had to Obama, and with all of the Biden camp's pulling and hauling, they were unable to persuade Petraeus to drop his demands. The weighing of Gates, Hillary Clinton and Mike Mullen in support of Stanley McChrystal's strategy gave additional strength to Petraeus. The war between Petraeus and the White House was fought not only in the Situation Room, but also in the open, in public, making it considerably difficult for Obama to refuse the military's requests for a counter-insurgency strategy. However, once Petraeus's magic wand failed to produce the intended results in Afghanistan by 2011, his demands were easily declined by Obama, who managed to redirect the strategy towards a counterterrorism-plus. Had there been a bureaucratically strong Petraeus of 2009 in 2011 or a bureaucratically weak Petraeus of 2011 in 2009, both resulting policies could have been very different.

Another causal factor this thesis has considered is personal traits, especially the belief system and images of policymakers. The belief system and images of policymakers, the two Presidents in particular, were instrumental in the foreign policy decision-making towards Afghanistan. Had it not been for the aggressive views of President Bush, for his operating style that refused his instinctive views to be questioned, the GWOT might have never been launched. Had Obama been the President when 9/11 took place: he might have adopted a highly analytical decision-making approach and consequently avoided launching the US into war, or at least into such a broad war with a faceless enemy that included numerous states and terrorist organisations. But Bush was not Obama, as Bush had different beliefs to Obama: Bush saw being offensive as the only solution to terrorism. Bush had different images of terrorism: terrorism could eventually defeat big nations if not severely dealt with. Using US forces as peacekeepers or in nation-building operations was not the duty of US military forces for Bush, and, most importantly, such an undertaking was not relevant to

defeating terrorism. Fortunately for Bush, the views of the defence hawks, Cheney and Rumsfeld, as well as the neoconservatives, were naturally consistent with those of Bush, and the result was obvious: launching a broad war without it being thoroughly debated – Bush's decision-making style did not encourage debate. However, Obama believed in a decision-making style to be deliberate, analytical and all-inclusive. It was the result of such a decision-making style when his long-held belief system and images of the Afghanistan War were challenged by the Biden camp and the inner circle. Consequently, he did not see the Afghanistan War as necessary, and believed it no longer was winnable in the way the military assumed, so he wanted to bring a responsible end to it by establishing a good enough state that protected only US interests. By 2011, he managed to pave the way for such an Afghanistan. He might not have approved the surge in 2009 had he not faced the strong beliefs of the military camp: the Afghanistan War was winnable if the US applied a counter-insurgency strategy; if not, if the surge was refused, the US would lose the war. While one belief system was pushing the US into Afghanistan, the other was pulling it away. In the Af-Pak review in 2009, the former won the day, but in 2011 the latter succeeded.

Penultimately, this thesis considered the impact of domestic influences upon decision-making and the resulting decisions. As part of domestic influences, the contribution of Congress, the media, and the area experts were considered. These actors, together with US economic conditions, had an indirect role: constituting a policy atmosphere by contributing to public debate. After the 9/11 terrorist acts, the support of Congress, the media and ordinary Americans turned Bush (and his advisors) into a bold president, vowing to 'root out' terrorism. To do so, they gave terrorism a broad definition and kept the GWOT wide and open. The same domestic support carried on during the decision-making for the counterterrorism strategy. However, once the domestic support was lost due to the Iraq War and the failures of the counterterrorism strategy in Afghanistan and Iraq, and practically all the above actors were turned against the President and his GWOT strategy, he privately swallowed his numerous doctrines. The domestic support for a counter-insurgency strategy in Afghanistan was instrumental in making the Bush Administration take the first step towards the strategy in the Afghanistan War, the necessary war, in 2008. However, by time of the decision to surge in 2009, the Afghanistan War was no longer considered necessary by many in Congress, the media and area experts. There was a divide among the actors, forcing Obama to reach for a compromise. However, by 2011, the public debate

swayed more towards a swift withdrawal, enabling Obama to approve a drastic drawdown rather than that recommended by the military.

Finally, and most importantly, the thesis considered the impact of the ‘false assumptions’ upon decision-making and the resulting policies. It was the impact of the false assumptions that weakened the bureaucratic locations of the defence hawks and the neoconservatives in the Bush Administration. If the GWOT continued to be as successful in the second term of the Bush Administration in Iraq and Afghanistan as it had been during 2002 and early 2003, Cheney, Rumsfeld and the neoconservatives would have most likely remained the driving force in decision-making. Public opinion would have in all likelihood continued to be on their side. Their beliefs – the declaration of war and the four doctrines – would have applied to Iran, Syria and other rogue states. But the opposite happened once their policy assumptions failed at the implementation phase. The same was the case in relation to the military camp in the Obama Administration. If Petraeus managed to prove his assumptions correct in relation to the Afghanistan War, he might have been able to persuade Obama to continue with his strategy for a few more years. As he had quietened Congress in relation to the Iraq War a few years earlier, he might have been able to do the same in relation to the Afghanistan War. The difference between the Bush and Obama Administrations regarding the policy assumptions was Obama, due to his deliberate and analytical operating style, knew that the military assumptions would most likely prove false, but Bush, due to his hasty, secret and emotion-based decision-making approach, was certain the policy assumptions would prove accurate. As seen, most of these assumptions, especially those regarding the GWOT, were based on ideologies or belief systems that were American-born and ignorant of the realities in Afghanistan and Iraq. Their failures greatly triggered changes in the GWOT strategy in Afghanistan over the course of the eleven years.

This study was an attempt to examine carefully the policymaking process in the case of US Afghan policy. By investigating the decision-making process and by analysing the impact of policymakers and their personal characteristics, as well as external actors upon the process, this thesis proved that human actors are the most important force in decision-making. By identifying four key developmental turning points, and by utilising the multilevel, multi-factorial, and multidisciplinary FPDM Approach from FPA, it is hoped that a unique, broader, more comprehensive, and original understanding was provided in regard to what, why and how US Afghan policy took its different forms over the course of eleven years. By

focusing on different players, both from within and outside the two administrations, and numerous factors, as well as giving a detailed narrative of the inner workings of the Bush and Obama Administrations, it is hoped that the study highlighted the complicity of policy formulation. By introducing Afghan viewpoints, those of President Karzai in particular, through the theme of 'false assumptions', it is hoped that the study provided an original insight into US Afghan policy. By providing a detailed account of policymaking process, it is hoped that numerous different theories regarding US motives were indirectly rebutted.

As seen during decision-making periods for the four decisions, the initial intervention and the subsequent policy changes had nothing to do 'with some other ulterior motives' on the US side. The analysis of the four decisions would suffice to invalidate all other possible motives. The fact that the US spent \$5 trillion on the two wars by 2011 would negate all those arguments relating to financial motive both in Afghanistan and Iraq. The fact that the financial costs of the two wars posed a strategic threat to the US would void motives concerning 'other' strategic interests. The fact that Obama left Iraq and was on the brink of leaving Afghanistan rebutted all those possible motives concerning the US trying to establish 'permanent bases' in the Middle East and South Asia against this or that country. As was vividly obvious during policymaking for the four decisions, one factor or motive that initially had drawn the US into Afghanistan in 2001 and kept it still embroiled in 2011 and beyond was to keep the streets in the US and the allies' countries safe from further attacks.

### **A FINAL WORD ON THE NATURE OF US LONG-TERM AFGHAN STRATEGY**

US policymakers continued after the drawdown decision to stress that US Afghan strategy had four elements: keep advising, training and assisting the ANSF post-2014; build a long-term relationship with the Afghan Government and build its capacity in critical areas; provide support for Afghan reconciliation; and promote regional stability and economic integration, e.g. integrating Afghanistan into South Central Asia's economy.<sup>1</sup> Obama,

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<sup>1</sup> Obama, Barack, (2011). Remarks by the President on the Way Forward in Afghanistan. [The White House]. <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/06/22/remarks-president-way-forward-afghanistan>>; Cunningham, James B., 'Testimony of James B. Cunningham Ambassador-Designate to Afghanistan Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, July 31, 2012, <<http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/2012/07/31/nomination>>; Feldman, Daniel, 'Testimony Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Daniel Feldman U.S. Department of State Before the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on International Development and Foreign Assistance, Economic Affairs and International Environmental Protection "Afghanistan: Right Sizing the Development Footprint"', Hearing Before *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, September 8,

therefore, strongly supported the 2012 Chicago Summit, which agreed on the size, cost and sustainment of the ANSF. According to the Summit, the US and coalition states would provide about \$4 billion after 2014 each year for the ongoing training, equipping and financial aids for the ANSF. Another \$16 billion in aid over the next four years was pledged in the Tokyo Conference in July 2012. The sum was to cover Afghanistan's fiscal gap recognised by the World Bank.<sup>2</sup> About six months before these two major gatherings, it was agreed in the International Conference on Afghanistan in Bonn on December 5, 2011, that the US and the coalition would provide support to Afghanistan throughout the transformation decade (2015-24) to consolidate the progress made by the three surges – military, civilian and diplomatic – so that the Afghans took responsibility for security. In other words, the US would ensure that the security, economic and democratic achievements were sustained and continued.<sup>3</sup>

To guide the US-Afghan relationship beyond 2014, the Afghan Government and the US signed the Strategic Partnership Agreement in May 2012.<sup>4</sup> This was to pave the way for a Bilateral Security Agreement (signed in October 2014) that would supersede the US current Status of Forces Agreement and would allow a small number of US forces (eventually decided at 9,800) to remain in Afghanistan until the end of 2016 to train, advise, and assist the ANSF and conduct CT operations within Afghanistan and Pakistan to deny insurgents sanctuaries.<sup>5</sup> At the end of the transformation period, Afghanistan was *assumed* to transform into a self-sustaining country (or what the new Afghan President Ashraf Ghani Ahmedzai might call a 'functioning state')<sup>6</sup> both militarily and in terms of government. Obama *hoped* that during the 'transformation period', especially *after* the end of 2016, the

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<sup>2</sup> Perlez, Jane, '\$16 Billion in Civilian Aid Pledged to Afghanistan, With Conditions', *The New York Times*, July 8, 2012; Cunningham, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup> Cunningham, op. cit.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Landler, Mark, 'U.S. Troops to Leave Afghanistan by End of 2014', *The New York Times*, May 27, 2014; Sieff, Kevin, '5 harsh truths about the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan', *The Washington Post*, May 29, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Ghani, Ashraf, Clare Lockhart, Michael Carnahan, 'Closing the Sovereignty Gap: an Approach to State-Building', 2005, <[odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/2482.pdf](http://odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/2482.pdf)>; Gregg, Heather S., 'Beyond Population Engagement: Understanding Counterinsurgency', 2009, <[www.dtic.mil/get-tr-doc/pdf?ADA510429](http://www.dtic.mil/get-tr-doc/pdf?ADA510429)>

ANSF would be able to self-secure the country and the imperfect Afghan state provide some form of basic governance to its population in those areas it controlled.

### **ANOTHER ASSUMPTION: COULD IT NOT BE FALSE AGAIN?**

It is very possible that Afghanistan will meet its objectives by the end of the transformation period, *provided* the US and the international community continue to provide military, economic, political and diplomatic assistance. Despite their numerous shortcomings, the ANSF are the *best* and *only* hope for both the Afghans and the international community, and through their enormous bravery and sacrifices they have managed, against all the odds, to establish security after it was handed down to them. The Afghan Government, inadequate as it is, has managed to provide basic services in most provinces in Afghanistan. The new Afghanistan is like a little baby who has just begun to crawl, but it needs the support of an adult to guide it to stand on its own two feet. But that guidance should not be provided in a patronising way, or in a way so as to violate Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the human rights of Afghans. It should be remembered that tens of thousands of Afghans lost their lives to bring good not just to their country, but also to the US and the countries of the allies. Their tremendous sacrifices should be remembered and honoured. Nor should the West judge things in Afghanistan by Western standards: what has been achieved in Afghanistan so far is *a lot*, thanks to the tremendous sacrifices made by the US and allies, as well as the Afghans themselves. Never in the history of Afghanistan has so much been achieved in the course of one decade or so! If the achievements are kept and built upon, Afghanistan may meet its goals by the end of the transformation period. But the achievements are under threat, especially by those elements supported by the Pakistani Army. Had it not been for the interference of Pakistan, Afghanistan would look completely different – peaceful, progressed, stable, thriving, and secure. It is therefore important to search for a political solution to the Afghanistan conflict. However, finding a political or regional solution, especially one in which Pakistan genuinely participates, looks challenging, if not impossible, at present. Ultimately, the US fight in Afghanistan has been indirectly with the Pakistani Army, or at least, with those whom the Pakistani Army supported, including AQ. The US has had two options: to approve a harsher approach towards Pakistan, like it has currently

towards Russia for its interference in Ukraine; or to keep the relationship with Pakistan cordial in order to persuade it that a stable Afghanistan is good for everyone, including Pakistan. While it did not approve the former option for the reasons explained in previous chapters, the latter option produced no tangible outcome. There is, however, a third option: build the walls for the Afghanistan house so thick and tall that the neighbours, Pakistan included, are unable to interfere. By this I mean keep strengthening the ANSF, the Afghan Government, the Afghan institutions such as Afghan civil society to an extent that they together put a stop to Afghanistan being a battlefield for neighbouring states. In other words, *deliver* on the promises made in the numerous summits discussed above; and deliver upon them up to the end of the transformation period. If all goes as promised, in a few years' time the US need not keep any presence in Afghanistan (a big cause of fighting by TB), as the ANSF will conduct counterterrorism operations instead. If not, if the promises are not delivered, Afghanistan might again become a safe haven not only for the Taliban and Al Qaeda, but also for other extreme groups, groups that the US and the allies might have never dreamt of emerging!

## **THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study could open a number of routes for further research. First, decision-making towards Afghanistan within both the Bush and Obama Administrations is still an understudied area. Second, the impact of Congress and area experts separately upon decision-making towards Afghanistan could make a fascinating contribution to the literature. For example, it seems that area experts developed the assumption that the application of more pressure on Pakistan would make the Pakistani state collapse. As briefly seen, the assumption had severe consequences for US Afghan policy on the ground. The analysis of this assumption and its impact on US Af-Pak policy might be a valuable contribution to the literature. Additionally, studies providing answers to the following questions could offer valuable contributions: what was the impact of Congress on the decision to intervene in Afghanistan? Did Congress play a role in influencing Obama to surge or withdraw US troops? The same questions could be asked in regard to area experts. Third, and most importantly, the impact of the personal traits of Presidents Bush and Obama may provide a worthy contribution to the literature, e.g. how Bush and Obama saw different



roles for the US in the world; or what role the belief systems and images of Bush and Obama played in US Afghan policy. These questions could enable the researcher to delve into the depths of the belief systems and images of the two presidents and the impact they had upon policy formation. Covering these variables individually could provide a focused and rich-in-detail analysis.

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